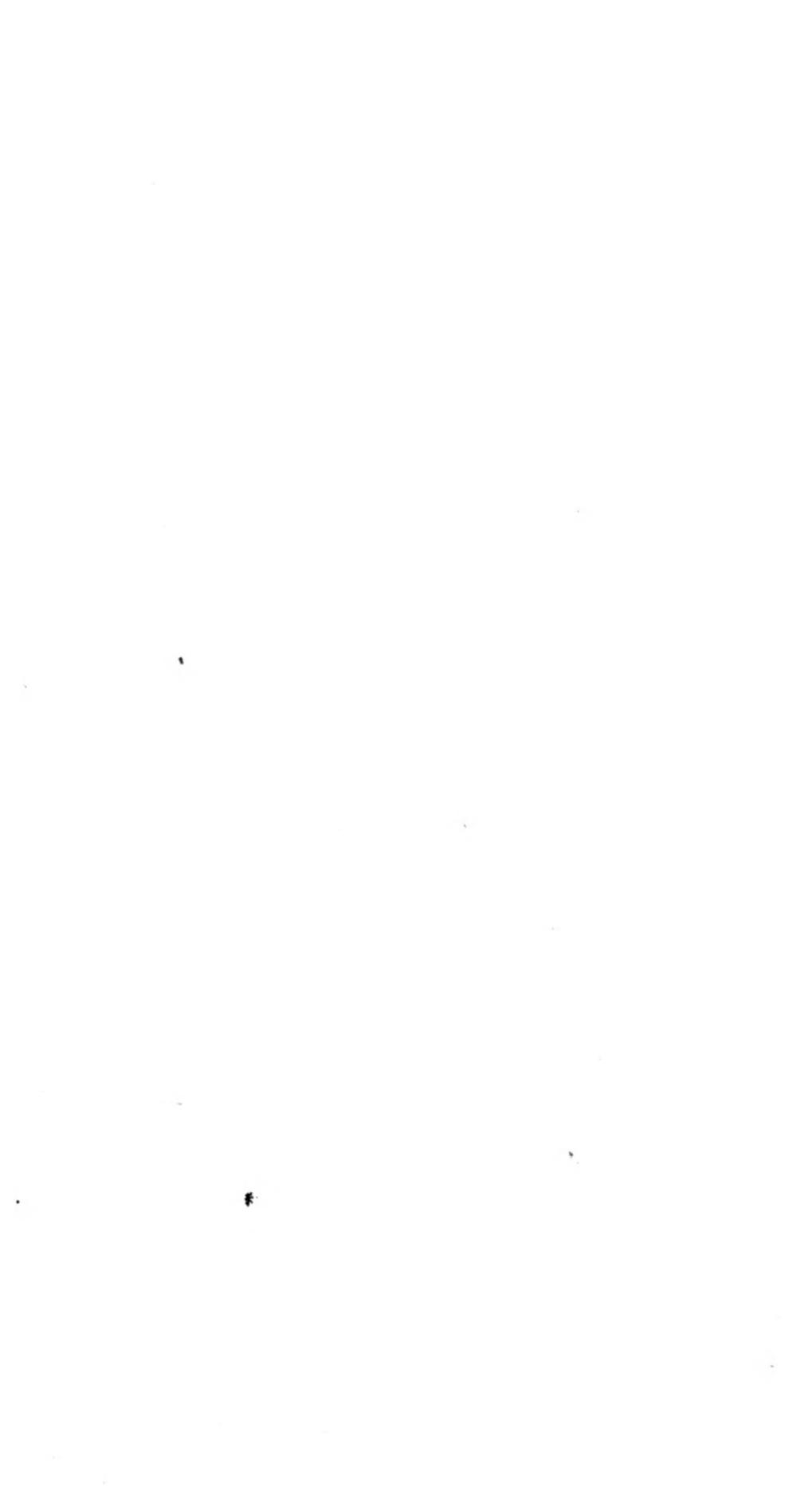




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Tracts on the church and her  
offices





*Maryant Shepherd*

TRACTS

ON THE

CHURCH AND HER OFFICES.



TRACTS  
ON  
THE CHURCH  
AND  
HER OFFICES.

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BY THE REV.  
FREDERICK W. FABER, M.A.

FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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I am the Mother of fair love, and fear, and knowledge, and holy hope: I therefore, being eternal, am given to all my children which are named of Him.—*Ecclus. xxiv. 18.*

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TO THE  
REV. THOMAS WHYTEHEAD, M.A.  
FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE,  
CAMBRIDGE,  
THIS VOLUME  
IS INSCRIBED,  
BY HIS  
VERY AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,  
THE AUTHOR.



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I BELIEVE IN ONE  
CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC  
C H U R C H.

NICENE CREED.

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BY THE REV.  
FREDERICK W. FABER, M.A.  
FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house  
of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the  
truth.—**1 TIM. iii. 15.**

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FOURTH EDITION, ENLARGED.

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## I BELIEVE IN ONE CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

NICENE CREED.

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THERE was once a time, though alas ! it is many hundred years since, when the Holy Catholic Church was a glorious building, all one, like the seamless vest of her Master, Christ. The remote cities of Egypt and Syria, Greece and Rome, Gaul and Britain, were all one body, in one Lord, one faith, one baptism<sup>1</sup>. The voice of discord was scarcely heard within her. Heresy found no resting-place within the sanctuary. The Church was like the New Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all. East and west, north and south, continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers<sup>2</sup>. These were happy times, a great deal too

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Acts ii. 42.

happy to last. It was a state of things too unlike this world; and it was easy to see, that as soon as ever the Church and the world became friends, one or other of the two must become very much altered: and as we all know that the world is very pliable, and has a way of seeming to give up a great deal, while in fact it gives up nothing at all, it was most probable that the Church would be the sufferer. Thus it turned out. She left her first love, and so the glories of her candlestick were dimmed. It is not necessary for my purpose, as practical to ourselves, to follow her course as she journeyed from east to west. Long time abode we in Rome, doing as Rome bid us, albeit she was a hard task-mistress.

At last it came about from a variety of circumstances that there was a religious movement all over Europe, in some places tumultuous, in other places under authority. Kings and princes joined it to serve their own ends, and the people followed one side or other, and called themselves by party names which they did not understand. This was in the sixteenth century. England was affected by the movement. The king and his nobles were impure,

greedy, tyrannical, and did not care for religion, but only for the gratification of their lusts, and the unholy plunder of Church lands. But out of it all God brought some blessings, even through the means of these bad men. The English Church made changes in her doctrine, and her ritual ; because of which the Roman Church separated from her. Division brought with it its usual evils, and sad excesses. Other men fell off from the Church of England on the other side. Every man thought he was to be a Church to himself. One party thought this the most important doctrine of Christianity, another party thought another, and a third party chose a third. And so they separated, always in anger, and each took his own path ; a most unblessed strife, and, like the parting of Lot from Abraham, full of danger and of trouble. The Church of England, too, was quite unable to remedy this. The kings and rulers of the times would not let her have her discipline back again. She had trusted too much to them. She had let them take matters too much into their own hands. She had not had faith enough in her own powers and titles. And this was what

came of it ; this was the way she was punished. She has never ceased to regret it. She humbles herself for it, and deplores her weakness in the commination on Ash-Wednesday year by year.

Meanwhile she did not seek to invent a new system for herself ; but to reform her old one. With all teachableness and much meek wisdom she turned herself to the purest, youngest days of Christ's virgin Church : and in her doctrine and her discipline, as well as in her solemn and decent ceremonial, she took care to fashion most things “ according to the pattern God had showed her in the primitive Church.” And she was blessed in her deed. Sect rose after sect, and fell ; while she moved calmly and steadily along, holding up on high the clear lamp of truth ; and thus will she move on, be the world never so unquiet, if only her own sons do not turn their arms one against another in unhallowed strife. Now this is the state of things we find ourselves in at present. The Church keeps on in her old way. But almost numberless sects have risen up along side of her, some having forsaken the Apostles' fellowship, and some, alas that it

should be so ! the Apostles' doctrine, and some even denying the Lord that bought them. They have pitched their tents all about the holy camp, like the mixed multitude that followed the true Israel of God from out of the land of Egypt.

There was a time, as I said, when the Church and the world were *visibly* different bodies : and so long as it was so the Church did well. When they met it was ever in blood, the blood of the saints, and the Church was strengthened by it. But now they are mingled together, so far as ever they can mingle, and we have suffered from it. A sort of sleepiness has come over the world, as if it were growing old and waxing to its decay. Its activity has become restless, feverish, and intermittent, like that of an aged man : and if love is to wax cold, and faith to be rare in the earth, when the Son of Man shall come, may He not now be at hand ? It is not for us to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in His Own power ; but what we may discern in the signs of the times that we are bidden to discern. Therefore let each man be thoughtful, and ponder all the strange things he is now

seeing, and commune with his own heart, and be still. There shall no divination prosper against Israel.

However in this state of things we *may* be asked by others, we *must* sometimes ask ourselves, Why are we members of the Church of England rather than of any other of the religious societies about us ? A very common, and for plain men a very sufficient answer is, that we belong to the Church because our forefathers for generations and generations have done so.

All change is bad from its very nature. It is full of evil ; it unsettles and disturbs ; it is full of the world ; it is the very spirit of the world ; and nothing worse can be said of it. Whenever we are tempted to change any thing, we must not only be quite sure that the old system contained evils, but also that those evils were more numerous and more important than the ones we must inevitably bring in by change. So cautious, so slow, so meek must we be ; so different from those rash and headstrong men who are for changing every thing, though they are not certain that they know all the hidden uses of that which they attack. But change

in religion is of all things most perilous. We all of us feel how intimately our spiritual life is bound up in little things, and how change of time and place and company is always putting us wrong. It dislocates our religious habits ; our religious ways of thinking, and acting, and speaking. This is the great reason why we should oppose all changes in our ancient Liturgy. It would disturb and unsettle the people. The Prayer-Book is their own Book : it is their own inheritance, which the Church has given them ; and many a time in the hour of trouble, of sickness, and even of death, has a fragment of some one of the Church prayers rested on the sufferer's memory, full of gentlest power to sanctify and calm his soul.

In this way, therefore, we naturally cling to the Church of our Fathers ; but more than this. It is here in the Church, and here only, that we meet with them. We sit upon the seats whereon they sat to listen to the accents of the everlasting Word ; and they are in their graves about us. There their bodies rest till the day of judgment ; and the spirits of many, very many of them are, we trust, in

Abraham's bosom. We come here to worship among the dead, to worship where we rest ourselves, where we ourselves shall rise once more to meet the Master at His coming. This is a very solemn thought : and, when St. Paul tells us that we have already " come to the spirits of just men made perfect<sup>1</sup>," we may well feel that there is a sense in which the Dead form part of every Christian congregation. The dust beneath our feet is full of life, and very precious in the sight of God : and shall we lightly leave a place of such holy sadness to go we know not where, to follow we know not whom ? Surely not ; and this is the reason why I said that for plain men it was quite a sufficient answer to say that we belong to the Church because our forefathers did.

But now-a-days this is not enough to silence questioners, not always enough to silence ourselves. Why did our forefathers belong to the Church, for there were plenty of sects even in their times ? They could not have belonged to it because *their* forefathers had done ; for *they* had been sons of Rome. This

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xii. 23.

is what men say ; and the answer is very plain, and we must take heed to it. Though our forefathers were sons of Rome, yet were they still more sons of the Church of England, just as much so as we are, and we no more than they were. Romanists have said so often, and with so much noise, that we are schismatics, that ignorant and indolent people think it is the easiest way to believe it, and to argue about it no more. Our forefathers *did* belong to the Church of England. We will not leave them : we will not have them taken from us ; we will not be cut off from communion with them, those fathers of the old English Church. Our forefathers in Henry the Eighth's time did continue to belong to the Church, because *their* forefathers also, in the days of the Henries, Richards, and Edwards, before that, had belonged to it. But we may find also a further answer in the Church herself, some excellence in her, some attraction in her ; something or other, in short, which was to be had in the Church, and was not to be had out of it. The Church has many such things as these, but there are three in particular which would come strongly home to

plain pious people in all times, but in troubled times particularly ; and on each of these I would make a few plain remarks, by way of furnishing you with a ready and I trust a complete answer to the insidious questions of our enemies. These three gifts are—*the lawful administration of the Word and Sacraments—a primitive and set form of Prayer—and stability.* —The time is now come when these matters must cease to be merely the business of the scholar. They have a practical usefulness to ourselves as humble but affectionate children of the Church within whose quiet walls we have grown up. But there is still another point to clear up before we begin—“ What is the Church ? We hear this word on all sides of us now. What does it mean ? What ideas are we to attach to it ? What clear meaning are we to give it ? ” First I will tell you what it does not mean. It does not mean the invisible company of the really pious, the elect, the predestinated, and so on. It does not mean any congregation gathered together any how, and worshipping any how, and governed any how, professing to believe the Bible, and interpreting it any how. It does

not mean the established Church of England—that is only part of it, and its being established has nothing to do with making it a church. It would be just as much a Church, just as much to be obeyed, just as much to be honoured, if the establishment were destroyed in the next session of parliament. Now I will tell you what the Church is. It is a visible society, called in Scripture the Body of Christ. It is a visible institution governed by bishops, priests, and deacons, baptizing all nations, explaining the Bible in creeds, giving the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation, absolving the penitent from sins, feeding the faithful with the Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Communion, and continuing itself by creating new bishops, and priests, and deacons, by the laying on of hands in apostolical succession. It is the outward visible form of Christ's religion, which exists in it only and not out of it. It is a vessel which all men can see and touch, a vessel filled, informed, lighted up, by the true faith. If any break it or spill any of the truth out of it, that truth, so spilled, loses its fragrance and its virtue; and they who carry it away are here-

tics and schismatics, and in the end make no profit of their sacrilege. In the Apostles' creed we call the Church holy and Catholic : in the Nicene creed we say it is one, and apostolic. It is *one* because it is built on the one faith once delivered to the saints, getting life from the one Incarnate Lord, directed by the one Spirit, washing us with the one Baptism, and leading us all to the one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all. It is *Catholic*, which is a Greek word meaning universal, because it is not in England only, or in France only, or at Rome only, but over all the world, differing in language, in dress, in ceremonies, in pomps, in ways and customs, in learning, and wealth, and grandeur, and the number of bishops, and the beauty of cathedrals, and the ornamenting of churches, sometimes in more error, sometimes in less error, yet still over all the broad earth holding and teaching, as the Church universal cannot fail to hold and teach, the one Lord and one faith, directed by the one Spirit, washing with the one Baptism, and leading to the one God and Father of all. It is *holy*, because He who founded it and is

with it is holy, even Christ the Lord ; because the end of it is a holy end, the salvation of souls, whereunto it calleth us with a holy calling ; because the institutions of it, its gifts and graces, its prayers and praises, its powers and absolutions and sacraments, are holy ; because holy angels minister to the heirs of salvation within it, and the spirits of just men made perfect are in it, and good and holy men on earth are its children. It is *apostolic*, because the bishops are the successors of the Apostles ; because it is under the form of government instituted by the Apostles through the leading of the Holy Ghost ; and because it keeps to the Apostles' doctrine as well as fellowship. This is the Church, One, Holy Catholic, Apostolic.

Having now made this matter plain, we will speak of the **LAWFUL ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENTS.** When our Lord and Saviour had broken the portals of the grave, He stayed awhile upon earth to cheer and support His Disciples in the doubtful and dangerous circumstances in which they found themselves. It was this very solemn time which He selected for investing them with

that high and awful commission to preach the Gospel, and to baptize all nations in the name of the ever blessed Trinity. It was in the evening of the first day of the week that the little band of faithful ones were met together with doors shut for fear of the Jews<sup>1</sup>. “Suddenly Jesus stood in the midst of them, and said, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.” Such was the evening of the first Sunday ever observed in the world. And when the Master ascended up on high, He repeated this commission, and added, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Such was the beginning of the Christian Priesthood. By this divine ordination all grace had been given to the Apostles; they were the rightful fountains from whence all Church authority was to flow. By virtue of this power they added to their own number St. Matthias; and

<sup>1</sup> St. John xx. 21.

afterwards, as the needs of the Church increased, they consecrated St. James, a relation of our Lord's, bishop of Jerusalem: St. Paul consecrated Timothy and Titus, bishops of Ephesus and Crete, and St. Peter consecrated St. Mark, Bishop of Alexandria. None were to preach who were not sent, none had the gift in them, save by the laying on of hands. When the visiting of the sick, the distribution of alms, and baptizing, multiplied in the hands of the Apostles, they constituted the Order of Deacons; of whom St. Stephen and St. Philip were chief ornaments; and lastly, we read of their ordaining elders, or, as it is in the Greek, presbyters<sup>1</sup>, in every church, praying with fasting, and commanding them to the Lord on whom they believed. These three Holy Orders of Apostles or Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, were thus established. From the earliest times down to the present have they been by God's good Providence preserved in the Church.

The Church of England, in the preface to the Ordination Services, has these express

<sup>1</sup> Acts xiv. 23.

words : “ It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles’ time there have been these orders of Ministers in Christ’s Church—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons—which offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same ; and also by publick Prayer, with Imposition of Hands, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful authority. And therefore, to the intent that these orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed, in the united Church of England and Ireland ; no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, in the united Church of England and Ireland, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the form hereafter following, or hath had formerly Episcopal Consecration, or Ordination.” And it is on this account that, if a clergyman of the Roman Communion does in this country join himself to

the English Church, his ordination is accounted good and valid, because the Roman Church has episcopal ordination and an apostolical ministry. He is not ordained over again, but simply licensed by a Bishop to teach and preach in his diocese. Whereas, if a Protestant dissenter, who has been accustomed to call himself a minister of the Gospel, repents of his schism, and is anxious to become a clergyman, the English Church considers him merely as a layman, and not as a minister of the Gospel; and makes him a clergyman by episcopal ordination. Furthermore, in ordaining priests, the Church, by the Bishop, uses these grave words, the “ Receivers humbly kneeling upon their knees,” the Bishop “with the priests present laying their hands severally upon the head of every one that receiveth the Order of Priesthood”—the Bishop saying to each—“ Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven ; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God, and of His Holy Sacraments ; in the name of the

Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.  
Amen."

The laying on of hands can be traced from the Apostles downwards in a long succession of bishops throughout the whole world ; and so absolutely necessary was Apostolical Ordination considered in primitive times, that St. Ignatius, a contemporary of the Apostles, distinctly says, " Without a Bishop, Priests, and Deacons, there is no Church !" Indeed I cannot give you a better or clearer view of this than by quoting a passage from this same holy Father, the friend of St. Peter and St. John. He thus writes to the Churches of Ephesus and Smyrna :—" On this account it is fit ye should obey your Bishop, which thing also ye do. For your deservedly blessed presbytery, which is worthy of God, is so fitted into your Bishop, as strings in a harp ; wherefore in your unity and musical love Jesus Christ is sung ; and be ye all and each of the Chorus, that being in tune and of one spirit, ye may lift up the song of God in unity, and sing with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father, that He may hear you, and know you by the things which ye do to be very members of His Son. Let no man be deceived ; if any one is not within the Altar,

that man falleth short of the Bread of God ; for if the prayer of one or two hath such power, how much more that of the Bishop and the Church ? Ye are the stones of the Father's temple, prepared for the building of God the Father, lifted up on high by the scaffolding of Jesus Christ, which is His cross, using for a rope the Holy Ghost : and your faith is that which bears you upward, it is that good way which leadeth unto God. Obey your Bishop, as Jesus Christ obeys the Father, and the presbytery as the Apostles ; and reverence the Deacons as the commandment of God. No one shall baptize or offer the feast of love, but the Bishop, or those whom he shall approve.”

I have thus compressed, into as brief a space as I possibly could, the doctrine of what is commonly called the APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.

But as it is a most essential doctrine, and lightly gainsayed in these days, it may be as well to leave the statement of it to three of as holy and learned Bishops as God has vouchsafed to the modern English Church, Bishops Sanderson, Taylor, and Beveridge.

Bishop Sanderson says :—“ My opinion is,

that Episcopal Government is not to be derived merely from Apostolical practice or institution, but that it is originally founded in the Person and Office of the Messias, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ ; who, being sent by our Heavenly Father to be the Great Apostle<sup>1</sup>, Bishop, and Pastor<sup>2</sup> of his Church, and anointed to that office immediately after His baptism by John, with power and the Holy Ghost<sup>3</sup>, descending then upon Him in a bodily shape<sup>4</sup>, did afterwards, before His ascension into heaven, send and empower His holy Apostles, in like manner as His Father had before sent Him<sup>5</sup>, to execute the same Apostolical, Episcopal, and Pastoral office, for the ordering and governing of His Church, until His coming again ; and so the same office to continue in them and their successors unto the end of the world<sup>6</sup>. This I take to be so clear, from these and other like texts of Scripture, that if they shall be diligently compared together, both between themselves and with the following practice of the Churches of Christ, as well in the Apos-

<sup>1</sup> Heb. iii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Acts x. 37, 38.

<sup>4</sup> Luke iii. 22.

<sup>5</sup> John xx. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. xxviii. 18—20.

ties' times as in the purest and primitive times nearest thereunto, there will be left little cause why any man should doubt thereof."

Bishop Taylor's words are as express : "This government was by immediate substitution delegated to the Apostles, by Christ Himself, 'in the giving of the keys, in the breathing of the Spirit, in the mission of Pentecost.' . . . This power so delegated, was not to expire with their persons ; for when the great Shepherd had reduced His wandering sheep into a fold, He would not leave them without 'guides to govern' them, so long as the wolf might possibly prey upon them, and that is, till the last separation of the sheep from the goats. And this Christ intimates in that promise, 'I will be with you (the Apostles) even unto the end of the world.' 'With you ;' not with your persons, for they died long ago : but 'with you and the like to you,' with Apostles to the end of the world. And, therefore, that the Apostolate might be successive and perpetual, Christ gave them a power of Ordination, that by imposing hands on others, they might impart that power which they received from Christ."

Lastly, the pious Bishop Beveridge says : “ In the first place, I observe, how much we are all bound to acknowledge the goodness, to praise, magnify, and adore the name of the most high God, in that we were born and bred, and still live in a Church, wherein the Apostolical line hath, through all ages, been preserved entire, there having been a constant succession of such Bishops in it, as were truly and properly successors to the Apostles, by virtue of that Apostolical imposition of hands, which being begun by the Apostles, hath been continued from one to another, ever since their time, down to ours. By which means, the same Spirit which was breathed by our Lord into His Apostles is, together with their office, transmitted to their lawful successors, the pastors and governors of our Church at this time ; and acts, moves, and assists at the administration of the several parts of the Apostolical office in our days, as much as ever. From whence it follows, that the means of grace which we now enjoy are in themselves as powerful and effectual as they were in the Apostles’ days.

As for schism, they certainly hazard their

salvation at a strange rate, who separate themselves from such a Church as ours is, wherein the Apostolical succession, the root of all Christian communion, hath been so entirely preserved, and the word and sacraments are so effectually administered ; and all to go into such assemblies and meetings, as can have no pretence to the great promise in my text. For it is manifest, that this promise was made only to the Apostles and their successors to the end of the world. Whereas, in the private meetings, where their teachers have no Apostolical or Episcopal imposition of hands, they have no ground to succeed the Apostles, nor by consequence any right to the Spirit which our Lord hath ; without which, although they preach their heart out, I do not see what spiritual advantage can accrue to their hearers by it.”

The importance which was attached to this doctrine in the best and purest ages contrasts strongly with the neglect into which it has now been cast. It was then one of the main reasons which might well attach our fore-fathers to the Church. Without this ministry how could they be sure of the blessed sacra-

ments ? For fifteen hundred years the whole Church had held that out of this ministry there was no legitimate Priesthood — what were they that they should *dare* to set up a new priesthood for themselves ? All this they doubtless felt ; and therefore, with singleness of heart, they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship. It is not my intention to dwell longer upon this subject. I have said enough for my present purpose ; it was to show you that when men are inclined to think lightly of change in the Church, when they are disposed to refashion it after their own imaginations, they should remember that they are meddling with an ordinance of God, and not with an institution of man.

Let us pass, in the second place, to THE PRIMITIVE AND SET FORM OF PRAYER, which we, as members of the Church, possess. It is not my intention now to prove either the reasonableness or the advantages of a set form of prayer. The example of the Jewish Church, and of our Lord Himself, Who gave His disciples that perfect Form which we daily use, the constant practice of the Apostles, and the invariable

usage of the Catholic Church, for centuries and centuries, are abundant arguments against public extempore prayer, if any such were needed. But I wish rather to point out to you how completely the Prayer Book is your own book, your own inheritance, as sons of the Church. In a series of services of pure and solemn beauty it accompanies you from the cradle to the grave. It meets you at the baptismal font, it furnishes you with a Catechism for your younger years; it goes with you when you seek the Bishop to take upon yourselves your baptismal vow. When you enter into the estate of holy Matrimony, there again the Prayer Book meets you, and sends you out into the world with blessing and with prayer: you see it still with the same unwearied care and assiduous love receiving your children at the Font, as it received yourselves before; and going from the Font to the Altar to join the thankful mother in her praises to Almighty God for her deliverance from the great pain and peril of child-birth. Then, when illness comes upon you, and lays you low upon the bed of suffering, the Prayer

Book brings the priest to your side, bids him soothe your aching heart, fill you with the hopes of the Gospel, and pour upon you, by his effectual blessing, and grave absolution, a peace which this world can neither give nor take away. Nay, it leaves you not, even when your eyes are closed in death ; it waits for you by the side of the opened tomb, and gravely and affectionately commits your spirit to Almighty God, reminding the dull earth that it must give your body up again at the resurrection of the Dead. Again : are there any of my readers who are mothers—whose affections are far away with sons who are serving their country on the great deep ? How blessed for them to feel that there, on the wide sea, the Prayer Book, perhaps the very one they gave them at parting, is with them still ; that its calm and untroubled voice is lifted up above the swelling of the storm ; and that should death come to any one among them, the Prayer Book speaks as much of hope and rest on the tossing waters as if it were still in a quiet country churchyard at home.

"Thou too art here with thy soft inland tones,  
Mother of our new birth ;  
The lonely ocean learns thy orisons,  
And loves thy sacred mirth !."

Now there is something so simple, so touching, so gentle, in this domestic character of our Church services, that a person who had weighed them well, a person who bore in mind how, for generations and generations, the Prayer Book, like a ministering angel, had walked side by side with his fathers, would surely feel as if he were wronging their sacred memory, lightly to leave the inheritance they had left him, and to seek for a home in some far land among aliens and strangers. It is only in the bosom of the Church that you can realize that strong feeling of home, which is so grateful to a mind weary with the endless tossings of this unquiet generation. It is the Church only, which, full of life and power within herself, can afford to discountenance that feverish excitement, on which unsatisfying food so many of the poor sheep of Christ are content to feed ; that can say to her children, in all her staid, and grave, and beautiful

<sup>1</sup> Christian Year.

solemnities, “ In returning and rest shall ye be saved ; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength !.” It is the Church only, who from her lofty seat will not stoop to allure you onwards by dangerous novelties in doctrine, or in discipline ; that turns neither to the right hand nor the left, but walks meekly upon the old ways whereon the Lord hath placed her, and where His gracious hand will keep her steady for evermore. It is the Church only who dares lift up her voice to reprove all heresy and schism, who will not, and does not, respect persons ; and who, strong in the confidence of her most holy faith, that faith once for all delivered to the saints, dares openly to pronounce the threatenings of God against those who deny the Divinity of His blessed Son, and bring another doctrine than that which hath been delivered to us from the beginning. Shall it be for us, then, to leave this loving mother ? Shall it be for us to hew out cisterns for ourselves, to leave those green pastures and fresh watercourses, wherein we now may live so peaceably ? I pray God most fervently that He will keep us stedfast in

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xxx. 15.

this faith, that He will not let us be “blown about by every wind and blast of vain doctrine;” “for he that is unstable as water, shall not excel.” I pray God, that in the ancient Church wherein we were all of us born, we may calmly and soberly live, and that in her enfolding arms we may, one by one, drop off to sleep, like innocent children, till the bright and Morning Star arises in perfect beauty, and we go to dwell with Him in the New Jerusalem.

And here I must warn you against crafty and treacherous proposals which are often being made, of “slight alterations” in the Prayer Book, and of concession in things of little moment. The situation the Church of England holds is a very peculiar one. She is like Jerusalem in her rebuilding. “Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded<sup>1</sup>.” We have been all along opposed to two classes of enemies, Romanists and Dissenters. But they used to attack us

<sup>1</sup> Neh. iv. 18.

in different ways. They hated each other more than they hated us. Their principles were directly opposite. In learning and piety, and in the affections of her sons, in steadiness to her own principles and confidence in her own primitive belief, the Church has vanquished them hitherto. But now they have joined together in an unholy alliance against us. There has never been so complete a union before, though King James did all he could to bring it about in a dishonourable underhand way. They court the world's favour that they may have the power to do us an injury. There is not a point in our doctrine, discipline, government, education, or services, where an enemy is not lying in wait. If therefore it were really desirable to make any changes, this is not a safe time to do it in. It is wrong to attempt it, so wrong that no well-meaning views or policy will serve to excuse it. We are keeping a jealous guard, and the enemy is wakeful. If we relax one moment, if we open one entrance, however small, we cannot tell what evil may befall us. Concession is as much a sign of weakness in times of difficulty, as it is of power in times of peace. Besides, what

have we to concede? and who are those to whom we should concede it? Our treasures are not our own to give up: they are the gifts of the Church of God. We received them from our fathers: we must hand on the precious deposit to our children. This is a sacred duty. The world would fain be thought our friend; and it is the world which advises us to concede. It bade our forefathers concede to the Puritans. But they were wiser with an evangelical wisdom, and heeded not the admonition. It is well for the world to concede. All it has is variable, and earthly, and it is its own. Temporal good, which is but a choice of evils at the best, is all it looks to. Therefore it is not the Church's friend, and cannot be, for it does not understand her spiritual rules of action. Besides, the friendship of the world is enmity with God.

Much that I have already said might have come more properly under the third and last head, THE STABILITY OF THE CHURCH. "Wisdom and knowledge," saith Isaiah, "shall be the stability of thy times<sup>1</sup> :" and doubtless the

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xxxiii. 6.

stability of the Church arises, in a great degree, from that DEPOSIT of pure and uncorrupt doctrine which she has kept with most jealous faithfulness. But, however this may be, as a matter of fact, obvious to all men, the Church has a stability which other religious bodies do not possess. Read the names of the early sects and heresies : Where are all these now ? Departed, as if they never had been ; forgotten, unknown, save to the scholar, who seeks them out in the records of antiquity. Nay, look even at far later periods in our own history. The names of nearly a hundred sects flourishing in the days of king Charles the Martyr, of blessed memory, are duly recorded by historians : of these all but two or three are passed away, and those live only in name, differing widely from their predecessors. The reason of all this is, that sects adapt themselves to an ever-changing world ; which the Church, blessed be God ! does not. Sects, from this very cause, seem often to have more success than the Church. They make more noise about it. But “growth is slow when roots are deep ;” and the Church, like her Master, listeth not up her voice in the streets.

The world goes its way ; and the Church hers. They get further apart every day ; and now they will never meet again till that day when too late the world shall discover its mistake, “when the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb : for the great day of His wrath is come; and who is able to stand<sup>1</sup>? ” We all of us feel that one of the strongest wants of our nature is rest. There is no end to our weariness and trouble, to our vexation and harassment of spirit. We would fain have the wings of a dove, that we might flee away and be at rest ; and where in this broad earth shall we find a resting-place for the sole of our feet, if we once desert the ark of Christ’s Church ? The waters are still out upon the land ; there is not so much as a twig of green olive for us

<sup>1</sup> Rev. vi. 15.

to gather and refresh ourselves withal. The world is very tempestuous without : but our vessel rides safely. She is full of living energy within herself. She has One on board, who, though He may *seem* to sleep, can rise when He will, and bid the wind and the sea be still ; and when we have Him with us, immediately we are “ at the haven where we would be !”

Our history is thickening, and getting more confused every day. But a churchman does not view history as a literary or worldly man does. For history is the record of God’s providence getting Himself honour out of man’s sin. It is so in little things as well as great, though we do not see it so plainly. We never get to see quite clearly in spiritual matters. We judge things by their outward seeming. But we know that, if by any means the scales could fall from our eyes, we should behold a scene no less wonderful and cheering than that which was revealed to the servant of Elisha. We see the host of the enemy and are afraid ; and, because we cannot see, we scarcely will believe of the horses and chariots of fire, wherewith the mountain is full, the host of

heaven which encampeth round about the righteous. The way of the world and its history are very perplexing ; and we get confused when we look for any length of time upon it. It seems to be travelling its own reckless way with fearful swiftness ; and our eyes cannot see in what all this will end. But we know that in its most furious tides, its most capricious changings, there is a hand keeping it under all the while, that it is compelled against its own will and against its own thought to accomplish day by day in all its wild workings His purposes of mercy and of judgment, and that whatever and whenever the end of all shall be, it must of necessity work together for good to them that love God, and wait for His appearing. We see this every now and then when great providences happen amongst us, and startle us for a moment into religion. It is then that God puts forth His Hand visibly, as it were, from underneath the veil of the holy Place, and we fall back to worship.

The history of the Church of England is rife in great providences. Since the Reformation

tion the land has been thrown into confusion by a most fearful rebellion. An Archbishop and a king have been martyred by the lawless people. The government has been changed for many years. The Church has been forcibly put down, so far as the hand of man and the power of law could put down the ordinance of God. Since then two kings have sat upon the throne of England, who were aliens from our faith, members of the Church of Rome, our bitter and cruel enemy : and by the latter of them, King James, the Church was persecuted, her Bishops committed to prison because they opposed his unprincipled conduct, and no means, honest or dishonest, left untried to work her ruin. Then another violent change took place. The succession was altered, and the crown assumed by another branch of the family. William was a foreigner, and knew absolutely nothing of the English Church. Besides he was surrounded by worldly and irreligious men, and cowardly money-loving, self-seeking Bishops, and, being himself a latitudinarian, as from the sin and bloodguiltiness of his early years he might well be, the Church cannot be

said to have been fostered and encouraged by him. Neither has it owed anything to the state since then except an abundant measure of forgiveness. Truly the movements of the world are very troublesome: yet we are the same. Our Cathedrals and Churches, our Sacraments and Prayers, our Government and Ministers still remain as of old, while every thing else around us has changed, and changed many times since then. The laws and constitution have never done changing. Religious sects only live by change and false excitement. The very external face of the country is changed by the springing up of large and populous cities. The Church has not changed. She has indeed silently and gradually extended herself, so far as she had the means, and so far as political jealousy would allow her, with the growing population. She has quietly raised her towers, and spires, and altars, among the new towns, and given the bread of life to her new sons. But to them she has brought the old laws and ministers and services. She stands among us as a type, and the only one, of that eternal and unchanging home, where she would fain bring

us all at the last, and for which end she has been placed here by her Lord. Why will men struggle against her ? They will not come off conquerors.

THE END.

THE  
ANCIENT THINGS  
OF  
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
IN ENGLAND.

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BY THE REV.  
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And these are ancient things.—1 CHRON. iv. 22.

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THE  
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PREJUDICES are not necessarily bad things ; although they may often do a great deal of harm. There are good prejudices as well as evil ones. There are prejudices which it is good for men to have, which good men always have, which a man could scarcely be good if he had not. This is only another way of saying that there are certain things which men are bound to believe in, and to love before they can give any reason for it. They have a natural feeling of jealousy about every thing which they respect or admire. They look with fear and suspicion upon whatever seems really to detract from that admiration. For example ; if a man has a friend, who excels in any particular attainment, he listens with distrust, often with dislike, to any thing which takes from

the merit or the worth of that attainment. He feels that his friend is concerned in the matter. This, of course, is neither more nor less than a prejudice. Yet it is a prejudice which we love, and which we ought to treat with delicacy, kindness, and gentleness, all the while thinking better of a man for being actuated by it.

Now there is a prejudice of precisely the same sort as this against the doctrine of the One Catholic and Apostolic Church—*that it leads us away from Christ!*

It is quite strange to see how widely this is spread, even among serious thinking people. It shows us the danger of dwelling only on portions of the Bible, of picking and choosing, and assorting and systematizing certain favourite doctrines of Holy Scripture. It has really come to pass that Churchmen are afraid of the Church, and that too for the strangest and newest of all reasons, because it leads them from Christ. Surely on the very first view of the matter we should say it could not be true. It must be a prejudice ; a prejudice doing a great deal of harm, yet to be respected because of the good things out of which it comes.

A person unaccustomed to what are popularly called High Church opinions, is not unfrequently

struck at the perpetual recurrence of the word “*Church*” in the sermons, the writings, and even the conversation of those who differ from him, or at least think they differ. But he soon gets a step further than this. He sees that not only does this word “*Church*” come in very frequently, but that it comes in, in most cases, where he would have used one or other of our Saviour’s Names. If he is a hasty, proud, or uncandid man, he dismisses the matter at once ; and rests, where shallow and uncharitable religionists delight to rest, in an apposite, pithy misquotation of Holy Scripture. For instance, confounding, as is not uncommon, Jewish things and Christian things, such a man would imagine that he had at once accounted for, answered, and condemned this language by the words of Jeremiah—“The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these ;” as if one might not just as well say on the other side—“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Yet such is the use to which Christians now-a-days put the Word of Almighty God ! They make epigrams out of it. With these men we have nothing to do. There are others who are pained at the frequency of the word “*Church*,” and, as

it seems to them, the infrequency of the most sacred of our Saviour's Names. There is just this prejudice standing between them and Church views. A jealousy of the Church lest it should lead us, our thoughts, our hopes, and our affections from Christ. Now this shows that these love their Master truly, sincerely, and fervently. They are holy people ; and, although another man may think their love is not according to knowledge, yet he must have a cold, dull, ungenerous heart, who does not feel drawn towards them, seeing that they do really love their Saviour with so much warmth and simplicity. They, like Mary, have chosen the good part. They have seated themselves at the foot of Jesus ; and they look upon this doctrine of Church as a something to allure them from that one spot where alone grace is ever dropping from the anointed Son of God, something of human invention with the marks of man's wisdom and man's intellect about it, something which if admitted will distract the evangelical singleness of their hearts. Alas ! that people should think so : yet to speak harshly or bitterly, to say high and scornful things, to argue them down, would be to treat Christ's children as the world treats them. We are bound rather to shew them with

all meekness, softness, and constancy, that our love for Christ is as strong and fresh, as jealous and as vigorous as theirs: but that we express it in a different way, and that our reason for doing so is only because we think the different way the most reverent way; and, as such, more free from error, more full and satisfying and spiritual, and, as springing from obedience, more acceptable in the sight of Him Whom we adore and love. Surely, if a man would take the Bible, and patiently unfold all this, many who now start back from the Church, as if it were a substitute for Christ, would come in gladly to the old and apostolic view of it, when they found that Christ was ever there, clearer, brighter, more full of promises, more abounding in gifts than elsewhere; and enabling us to get closer to Him than we otherwise could do. Such persons are like St. Philip, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us:" and surely Christ may answer from out His Church, "Have I been so long time with you, and do ye not know Me?"

Unhappily the Church of Rome, our old enemy, remains our enemy still. She has done us as much harm almost since the Reformation as she did before it. Where she is really most unlike Scripture, there she tries to look most

like it: and the consequence has been that she has all along endeavoured to keep back from us certain high and primitive truths, by having her name, now a justly odious one, affixed to them. In this matter she has had more or less success at different times; to the great discomfort of all true and loyal sons of the Church of England. It may be as well then, old and trite as the subject is, to say a few words on some of those features of our Church, which bear at once a double witness against Rome on the one hand, or mere Protestant Congregations on the other. It will help to show that the only real preservative against Popery, because the only real preservative against perpetual change, is to be found in the views of the Church, from which many shrink back because of the *latent* Romanism supposed to be contained therein. The end of all religious change is Romanism or Socinian infidelity. To be safe from Rome, we must have doctrines older than Rome; and such we profess to have. We refuse to have our inheritance taken away from us, because an unfaithful Church has brought wild beasts into it, and left wreck and devastation all over its rich and happy fields. All this fortunately is matter of history, matter of fact; not a thing whereon to build

theories or abstract reasonings of our own. At all events, enough may be said to shew men, as well the cruelty, as the ignorance, of throwing big and fearful words of reproach up and down, without knowing exactly what they mean by them, and when perchance the hearts they wound are in the sight of God as deeply and intensely set upon the promotion of the pure and simple truths of the Gospel as themselves.

The Christian world since the Reformation has presented a scene as painful as it is singular. No matter whether we turn our eyes to the old corrupt Church of Rome, or to the infinitely various and contradictory bodies which separated from her, we see something in them all, some features, some characteristics, which are not to be found in the Holy Scriptures. Now in this respect, as opposed at once to Romanists on the one hand, and to Protestants on the other, stands the Church of England. Let us see how the case is with her. The ancient ceremonies of the Catholic Church, as well as its doctrines, were, in the west, in the keeping of the Church of Rome. She was not entirely faithful in her stewardship. She mingled up a good deal of error and novelty with most of them, rites as well as doctrines. She linked to many beautiful

ceremonies new notions of her own, having as little countenance from primitive usage as from Holy Scripture. Indeed, all really primitive usages, if not explicitly taught in Scripture, are indicated therein : and that is enough for faith and love. She went on doing this till she had rendered many practices, in themselves not merely innocent but catholic, quite unsafe. This was the state of things when our Formularies were drawn up. The theory of the Church of England, as set forth in them, was, that she was to be in her services, ceremonies, creeds, and manner of dealing with the Bible, pure, primitive, catholic, and evangelical. In her arches and her aisles, her towers and her foundations, every thing in her and about her was to be of Apostolic building, fashioned after Apostolic models, filled with the true and liberal light of Apostolic teaching. Such is the Church of England in theory. But in her endeavour to carry this fully out she was very much interfered with. “Without were fightings, within were fears.” There were many of the accessories of devotion, which the Church of Christ in the single-hearted innocence of early times, might enjoy without fear. It was not so now. Various rites, and forms, and ornaments, had the taint

of corruption in them. Another meaning than their own had passed unto them. They could not perhaps in the people's mind be divorced from the error to which they had so long been wedded. The Church therefore was compelled to forego them. So far she did lose something at the Reformation. It was nothing in comparison of what she gained. All changes are full of evil. The Reformation was not without evil, because it was a change. It had marvellously little evil in it, considering what a change it was. Only, not they who wrought the change, but they who made it necessary, are to be blamed. The fault, the heavy portion of the sin of that, rests with the Church of Rome. But after all, confessing that we are poorer in these things than our forefathers of antiquity were, still how rich are we even in primitive riches ! If no western Church now-a-days is quite what its Mother used to be, England surely comes nearest to her; nay, so near that they, who have well scanned the Mother's lineaments, can be at no loss to trace her features in the child. She did give up some things. It is granted. But what did she refuse to give up ? In what she did give up she witnessed against Rome. She witnessed just as much against modern sectarians in what she did

not give up. Some Christian bodies have sacrificed old primitive ceremonies to purity of doctrine, as if both could not be had together. Some have given up old Apostolical forms of Church government to what they deemed Gospel freedom, as if one were incompatible with the other, and not, as is the real truth, that the one only exists under the other. Some to avoid licentiousness have grown cold. Others to escape coldness have waxed licentious. The Church of England gave up none of these things. She has them still. They are her ancient things.

More or less perfect, more or less pure, more or less beautiful, still almost all the Christian congregations in the West, with the exception of the English Churches, have somewhat in them unscriptural, somewhat in them of man's devising, somewhat which rests neither upon the foundations of Apostles and Prophets nor on the corner-stone Christ Jesus. If we look deeper into the matter, we shall get a step farther. Whatever in them is unscriptural, is also new; and indeed, the Holy Scriptures being old, whatever is new must therefore and on that account be unscriptural also.

Now placed as we are, among various and conflicting bodies of Sectarians, among number-

less and contradictory forms of doctrine, a plain statement of the free evangelical principles of our own mother Church cannot be an unpractical subject for us to consider.

I.—That then which our Church has, and others have not, is first and plainly shewn in its reverence for antiquity. This is stamped upon all its services and formularies of doctrine. First in its old form of government. “It is evident,” says the Preface to the Ordination Service, “unto all men diligently reading Holy Scripture and *ancient authors*, that from the Apostles’ time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ’s Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.” Again, as to its doctrine, the Convocation of 1571, instructs preachers to take the Catholic doctors and ancient Bishops as guides in collecting doctrine from the Old and New Testament; and in the 34th Article, the Church forbids any one to break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church. So again in the Preface to the Prayer Book, concerning the Service of the Church, we are bid to search out the grounds thereof by the *ancient Fathers*; they give as a reason for rearranging the liturgy, that the godly and decent order of the *ancient Fathers* hath been so altered, broken and neglected; then, a few lines further

on, the division of the Psalms is authorized by the example of the *ancient Fathers*; and lastly it says, here you have an order for prayer and for the reading of the Holy Scripture much agreeable to the mind and purpose of the *old Fathers*: and all this in a preface only one page and a few lines long. Then in the next short preface on ceremonies, St. Augustine is twice quoted and referred to. Lastly, as if to show how natural this reverence came to the Church, if we look into her service, we have the prayer of St. Chrysostom, the creed of St. Athanasius, the Nicene creed. The 6th Article quotes St. Jerome, and the 29th St. Augustine. From this then, and from the strong and invariable teaching of our Reformers, we may draw the inference that the great characteristic of our branch of the Catholic Church of Christ is a reverence for antiquity. It is needless here to trace out the effect of this standing in the old paths, and looking out for the old ways and walking therein; how it has given a firmness and stability to our Church, how it has enabled it to flourish, and is still enabling it even under the most adverse circumstances: how its Three Creeds, for example, have been like so many bundles of myrrh in the Church's bosom, preserving it from the taint and the decay of heresy, of novelty, of human

systems, of unsoundness and degeneracy. Let us look rather,—it is the more instructive, because the darker, side of the picture,—at the effect which other Christian communities have experienced from their neglect of antiquity, their high and lofty and disrespectful handling of it. For example : the Protestant bodies on the Continent and dissenting communities among ourselves. The latter indeed have fared less evilly than their foreign brethren. The presence of the Holy Catholic Church amongst them has blessed them indirectly and as it were by accident. It has been to them like the body of the Prophet, touching the cold and lifeless corpse. It has given them a sort of energy, a borrowed, unnatural, awkward kind of life. Yet even amongst ourselves many communities are existing which deny what we believe to be the fundamentals of the Gospel of Christ. Some which began in difference of discipline and government, soon came to differ in doctrine also. They grew from bad to worse. From slighting the ministry which alone could administer the ever blessed Sacraments, they came to deny the grace of the Sacraments : some to disuse them altogether. Some deny the proper and eternal Godhead of our Saviour. So of course these

have ceased to be Christians at all. So it ever has been in Church History. Schism drops down into heresy, and heresy falls away at last into apostasy. Some openly teach that we should sin, that grace may abound. Others talk slightly and blasphemously of the insufficiency of the Written Word, and set up above it I know not what extravagant, indecent, and wretched tumults of their own base passions, which they attribute—most horrible to think, and which one almost shrinks from saying—to the Third Person of the adorable Trinity. The community founded by Calvin, though once it did hold the foundations of the faith amid the impure and turbulent notions wherewith he obscured the truth, is now the nest of infidelity and the favoured home of the Socinian apostasy. This is a fearful and appalling picture; and how unlike the calm, sober, bright, and fervent piety of the Church of England!

But now turn the other way, to that miserable and forlorn Church that once was Queen among the nations. With all her professions, the falsehood of which her own history sets forth, no Church has shown less reverence for antiquity than the Church of Rome; no Church has kept less faithfully that deposit of sound faith once for

all delivered to the Saints. The lineaments of a true Church of Christ are scarcely visible upon her, distorted, disfigured, buried beneath the load of utterly abominable and corrupt novelties wherewith she has overwhelmed them. The old doctors, to whom our Church refers us, could find, no more than ourselves, the doctrines of modern Rome in the Holy Scripture. Has she not made the Commandment of God almost of none effect by her traditions? Has she not destroyed the power of Bishops and the freedom of Churches by the unscriptural domination of the Archbishop of Rome? Has she not added falsehood to the Sacraments, and brought in purgatory, and other dark notions too distressing to be enumerated, perhaps even idolatry? And all this because she has neglected the single and pure voice of Christian antiquity. Look at the Church of Rome, as she was in ancient times, when she was called the virgin Church, because she was so free from all taint of heresy and unsoundness. She was then bright and glorious as a sunset sky, gleaming all over richly with the light of truth, kindled within her from the pure fountains of Apostles and Evangelists, a marvel to the nations, the bravest jewel that hung about the Cross of Christ. Then watch her as years rolled

on, watch her with rude and indelicate hand touching here and there her spotless heavenly creed. Where she touched she marred, where she marred there she left a stain. The light began to fade within ; one by one the lamps that hung there went out : the glorious thing grew paler and paler, emptied more and more of its splendour and its loveliness, its gifts, its graces, and its unearthly powers : till now the lines have melted away into the dull, cold, evening gray of the world around, and we scarce may tell whether she still is or is not a Christian Church. May God have mercy upon her, and upon all those gentle hearts within her who may, perchance, in her dark dim gloom be feeling after Christ ! This picture is as instructive as it is painful ; painful to us who, in early times, owed so much to Rome, painful to all who have the purity of evangelical doctrine deeply and solemnly at heart. She was our mother Church ; and we may almost hear the voice of God speaking to us in the words of Hosea :—“ Plead with your mother, plead : for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband : let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts ; lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her

like a dry land, and slay her with thirst. And I will not have mercy upon her children ; for they be the children of whoredoms. For their mother has played the harlot : she that conceived them hath done shamefully."

Such, then, on both sides of us, have been the consequences of being neglectful of Christian antiquity. May the lesson sink deep into our hearts, may we be so jealous of our inheritance, the fulness and the beauty of Catholic truth, that we may not be beguiled of our remnants of it, by any system which the pride or the ingenuity, the reasoning or the imagination of men may devise in these active and uneasy times !

II.—Now let us say somewhat on another characteristic of the English Church as opposed both to Romanists and to Protestants,—Its fearlessness of Scripture. Now this is a matter very practical to all of us. A narrow way of looking upon and reading the Word of God is common, is invariable outside the Church ; and as evil is always catching, we may become tainted with it ourselves, and thus depart from the purity of our own Church. So much is clear. No merely human system of doctrine dare trust itself with Scripture. It is afraid of it. It must be afraid of it from the very nature of things. The reve-

lation of an Infinite Being to finite and ignorant sinners cannot be systematic. It must be darkness and light mixed up together, mystery and glory running in and out of each other perpetually. The lines of the Christian scheme are in one place deep and darkly graven, in another faintly sketched, not unfrequently disappearing altogether, and beginning again in broken and fragmentary brightnesses up and down; in the Apostle's words, "We see in a glass darkly." But the pride of man will not be content with this. It will have clear, rounded, logical statements, critical accuracy, philosophical precision, literary propriety. This brokenness, this ruggedness, unevenness, indefiniteness in which the Gospel is put and left with mankind, is irksome to the weak, arguing, positive, cavilling intellect of man. They will have knowledge, not love. They do not see that practice is as clear as a sunbeam in the Bible. They are not content with knowing that doctrines are so and so, but they will know the *how*. They will have mysteries clear, as if they would not cease to be mysteries if they were so. There is not the holiest, deepest cavern in the Revelation of God, on which the Holy Trinity hath set the seal and sight of fearfullest mystery, whether it concern

the decrees of Jehovah, or the adorable dark things of the Threefold God we fear, adore, and love, but these rude men will break the seal, and think it wisdom, glory, and greatness to violate the Sanctuary. Faith knows not of, it shrinks back in horror from such philosophical sacrilege as this. It thinks only of obeying out of a childish heart. “Mine eyes gush out with tears because men *keep not Thy Law.*” These men are Christian Infidels.

Of course, one need not take long to show how Rome’s coward heart trembles at Scripture. She will not let her sons have it. She could not stand if the Gospels be the touchstone of a Gospel Church. Many reformed Congregations, though they have not shown it in this way, have sufficiently shown themselves to be human systems, because they are afraid of Scripture in its full length, and breadth, and depth. They take partial and contracted views of it. For example: Luther invented a new theory of justification: what was the consequence? He could not manage the Epistle of St. James; it refused to be crushed up into his arbitrary and tyrannical system; so, being a rough and violent man, he called it “an epistle of straw.” These scornful words he absolutely applied to a portion of the

living Word of God, written, as he and we believe, by the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost. So his opponent Calvin could not conceal how different his systematizing of Scripture was from the teaching of the purest antiquity. We read that he called the Nicene Creed "a childish sing-song," and that he objected to the use of the word "Trinity." These little things are very instructive. It would be easy, if it were not invidious, to multiply strange examples of this sort, taken, as the above are, out of books now in every body's hands. These, found in the two opposite and hostile bodies of Foreign Protestants, are enough for our purpose. Let us look to ourselves. Perhaps we are not utterly without fault in this matter.

First let us look at the theory and practice of our Church. The Articles and Homilies not only invite us, but drive us to the Scripture. In her services, the Calendar is so arranged that, with the exception of some Chapters, the Song of Solomon, and the Books of Chronicles, which are mainly repetition, the Old Testament is publicly read through entire every year, the New Testament three times, except the Revelation, the Psalms twelve times, beside the ninety-four Epistles and Gospels for Sundays, Saints'

days, and other holy days, throughout the year. This shows pretty clearly how fearless of Holy Scripture the English Church is; how free, Catholic, and really evangelical she is in her treatment of it. Now, let us look at our own practice, for it is much to be feared a sectarian and puritanical spirit, which is Popery under another name, has crept in among us in our handling of the Word of God. The sons of the Church have not heart enough to be as Catholic as their mother. For example: we may have known cold men who took low, unworthy views of free grace, justification, and the Cross of Christ. Those men, when they met with the words of St. Paul in such passages as, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:" and many similar passages which burn like torches up and down his writings, always guarded them with some cold and wretched caution about good works, and the necessity of holiness, and the danger of Antinomian views, and so forth. Now, all this is very true, but does the Holy Ghost say a word about it in those places? Are they not all the while distorting Scripture? Are they receiving teachably what is said in the place before them? Are they not doggedly fixing their thoughts on one part of the Gospel when

the Holy Ghost by the mouth of St. Paul is bidding them look at another? Is this to look Scripture in the face like men who are not afraid of it whatever it says? who are ready to be led by it, like Abraham, who went out not knowing whither he went? Surely there is a want of faith here.

Now take the other side. We may have known others, who, when they meet with such expressions as, "By thy words shalt thou be justified, and by thy words shalt thou be condemned," and many like passages which speak of reward and our own works, of not being justified by faith only, of Abraham being justified by works, flew off from them as if they were stung; and would begin to gather up all the texts which spoke of free grace, and dwell doggedly on them. If a man, and not the Holy Ghost in St. Peter said, "Baptism *saves* us," we should be told it was very wrong language, highly unevangelical, leading people away from Christ, and so forth. Now is not this to be wise above what is written? Is this to look Scripture in the face? To follow it quietly and peaceably in all its windings? Is it not all popery, the popery of the heart? Picking and choosing in Scripture? Is it to be sons of a Church whose Articles men fight about, some saying they are Calvinistical, others Armi-

nian while the Church is neither one nor the other, but follows Scripture wherever it leads her, and so to argumentative men, for faith never argues, seems to be inconsistent ; they never seeing that she knows nothing of Calvin or of Arminius, except to dislike and reject both as mere human teachers. So, forsooth, she is Popish in her Bishops and her ordinations ; semi-popish in her high view of the Sacraments ; Calvinistic in one Article ; Arminian in another ; Lutheran in a great many ; all three together in some ; while all the while she travels on in much meekness and much quietness, like a holy mother journeying with her child through the wilderness to meet the Master ; and ever and anon she meets first with one petulant wayfaring man and then another, who make new roads for themselves, sometimes running alongside her own, sometimes diverging far away, and ending, alas ! we know not where : and while they mock her and provoke her to argument, she has an answer ready for all. If her old and beautiful ceremonies are attacked, she is ready ; “ If any be contentious, I have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.” If Calvin, Luther, Arminius, and the like, be thrown in her teeth, and she be told to obey them, her answer is, “ Jesus I

know, and Paul I know; but who are these?" Oh! may Almighty God bless her evermore in this Apostolic moderation, and suffer her to be clothed still in the austere gracefulness of her primitive robes. The fashions of the world may change. The old garment of the Church may seem quaint and awkward and ill adjusted to new and modern doctors. But her work will stand the fire, and theirs will not. In one hour shall they be made desolate, because they were wiser than the ancients, and purer than Apostles, and keener-eyed than prophets. "Rejoice over them, thou heaven, and ye holy Apostles and Prophets; for God hath revenged you upon them."

In conclusion. If what I have said has been enough to give you some faint and imperfect outline of the system of your Church, and the peculiar position which she occupies: if it has been enough to show you how the outward resemblance of some matters of faith or practice to popery only sets off the more strikingly their inward and essential difference,—it may be well to say somewhat now on Church authority; for this is the way in which these points come practically home to ourselves. The Church can do no more than profess a theory. She cannot

force her members to carry it out into practice. She is without discipline. Her hands are tied. It is melancholy it should be so. Still, the question with ourselves, as humble and quiet Christians, is,—What is the best use we can make of an unfortunate state of things ? Surely to do that generously and affectionately, which our mother cannot compel us to do. It may be our lot to see her civil importance in the country diminished, by attacks on her Cathedral Establishments, because men at prayer seem to the world to be but men in idleness. We may see the hierarchy shorn of its strength, and beauty, and efficiency in Ireland, that a pure and evangelical Church may be more at the mercy of political agitators and seditious Romanists. The Church Catholic in the forlorn and injured Colonies may be stripped of her rights, and made over in mockery to the Providence of God; more sure and firm in that, than ever she could have been in the niggard bounty and unblessed protection of evil men. We may, perchance, behold the liberties of our venerable Universities, those perpetual fountains of the Church, which may God in His power and mercy bless and keep ! grievously disturbed, because men, who act on high, and noble, and Christian prin-

ciples are likely to be troublesome to those who act on low, and worldly, and unworthy ones. All this it may fall to us to witness. All this our duty to God may lead us to protest against, and, each in his appointed place, most seriously to condemn. Still, these are not our chief arms as Churchmen. We may talk, and write, and argue. It may be our duty so to do. But if this be all, we do not love our mother as we should do. We are not kind-hearted sons and dutiful. She appointed her fasts. Do we fast thereupon ? Are those days marked by any acts of self-denial, done for our mother's sake, and to her good, or are they lost in the common undistinguished mass of worldly days ? Are they times of deepest prostration of heart, of spirit-searching melancholy, of mournful confession of our sins,—our sins as a Church, as a nation, as a diocese, as a parish, as individual members of the Body Mystical ? Are her Festivals days of quiet and subdued spiritual joys ? Do we sit, like children, first at the feet of this Apostle, then of that, as she leads us round the blessed company to be taught, and bids us at such times live among the dead, our hands clasped in theirs, with a mysterious love, that we may so sit more lightly to the world when we go back to our

work and care therein? We see the clergy almost fainting, the harvest plentiful, and the labourers few. Dissent, and violence, and wrong, and party-spirit, and cruel opposition, making them slow, and weary, and sick at heart. Do we diligently watch for the Four Holy Seasons of the Ember Weeks to come round, when all the loyal Churchmen in the land are at prayer, and fast, and watching for their Bishops, Priests, and Deacons? We are bidden to be Catholic. The Church is one Body. She is the only Body we have to do with. Are we given to make arbitrary bodies for ourselves, parties, little sects, selfish distinctions, Churches within the Church? Our hearts then are not large enough. We know not how high, how glorious, how angel-like a thing a Churchman's charity is, or ought to be.

My brethren, it is in these things that the strength of our Church consists. It is not in the wealth of her laity. It is not in the learning of her priests. It is still less in the secular uneasiness of those who think themselves her friends, and would fain help her zealously, but whose zeal is not according to knowledge. And, moreover, it is in these things that she cannot avenge herself; and we are mean enough to take advantage of our mother's weakness. "My son," saith the Wise Man, "despise not thy

mother when she is old." To thoughtful men the Church is only the more terrible for her meekness. Vengeance is more sure because it lingereth. She hath made her cause over to her Lord. Thus she is like God Himself. His laws do not, in ordinary cases, avenge themselves here, as they were wont of old. They wait their time and His coming. To faithful men she is all gleaming with the gifts and graces of the seven-fold Spirit Who abides within her. "The King's daughter is all glorious within." The blessed Trinity is set up in her holy place, though it be not manifestly yet; the Glory that was to be her dower when her Spouse ascended up on high. But surely she is not a mother to be feared by her true and loyal sons.

If, then, we believe her to be in danger, if we believe her to be worthy of our love, why have we not the manliness to rise up into our places? Why do we stop, and hesitate, and question, and prove, and cavil, and dispute, when it is our mother whose voice is calling from the dust? Oh! let us cast off this bad and slavish spirit; let us knock away those cold chains we have bound about ourselves; let us rise like freemen in the freedom wherewith Christ hath made us free; let us be daring Christians, ancient Christians, ready, in the Name of God and of His

Christ, to walk on the waves with St. Peter, or drink the bitter cup with St. James and St. John, or to die, if need so be, with St. Paul. Prayer, and watch, and fast, with the mercy of our God, may yet save the Church on earth ; and thereafter cometh praise, and rest, and the Supper of the Lamb with the Church in Heaven.

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### ARCHBISHOP LAUD'S PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH.

O ETERNAL God and merciful Father, I humbly beseech Thee bless Thy holy Catholic Church, wheresoever spread upon the face of the whole earth. Good Lord, purge it from all atheism, heresy, schism, superstition, factious maintenance of groundless opinions ; that one faith, one Lord, one Baptism, may in all places be uniformly professed, as Thy Church is, and can be but one. And grant, good Lord, that I may be, and continue, a faithful, living, and a working member under Christ the Head, in that Church the Body, all the days of my life, and through the hour of my death, through the merits, and by the grace, of the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, and only Saviour. Amen.

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BY THE REV.  
FREDERICK W. FABER, M.A.  
FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.—JOEL i. 3.

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## THE CHURCH,

A

### SAFEGUARD AGAINST MODERN SELFISHNESS.

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WE are being continually called upon now-a-days to exercise the most blessed privilege and highest happiness, which falls to us as sons of God and heirs of heaven,—*self-denial for Christ's sake*. We are continually having put before us the cause of the growing population of this but half-Christian country, the generation who are now rising up about us, and who are to hand forward the Memory of Christ, and witness to His Gospel, and pass on His Cross to others in new Churches and upon new Altars, when we have been drawn into the inner world by the quiet hand of death. Now, I am anxious you should not be taken by surprise when such occasions come, that you should, while at your leisure, have taken some

account of the claims at such times brought before you, the claims of those vast English multitudes, among whom the Church is still to be set up, multitudes too often lawless and disturbed, because not enough beneath the Church's hand, but who are our brethren and our countrymen, with like cares and sorrows, like need of Sacraments, and Priests, and Churches, like souls to save. By being prepared with great and anxious thought on this subject, the suddenness or frequency of the claim will be less likely to stand in the way of the largeness of your self-denial. I propose, therefore, in these few pages, to lay before you in the general the claims of church building and church extension schemes, when brought before you by authority and in a church way, how urgent they are, why you should be called upon in the matter, and how blessed a thing it is for you to be able to put trust in God, and make sacrifices for Christ's sake. For this purpose it may be well to consider, how we are placed in this world, how we are connected with our neighbours, how the Church brings us close to Christ, as being our spiritual mother, and what Christ expects us

to do for His Church in return for all the great things she has done for us, and how that Church is now to one and all of us, a refuge from modern selfishness.

Different persons, different stations in life, different circumstances, tempers, and affections, are all liable to different sins. A rich man, for example, is tempted to be proud and careless about his soul: a poor man, to be discontented, and envious of those who are above him. So prosperity, which ought to make a man thankful, and to put him in mind of God at every turn, often makes him forget God altogether; and affliction, which ought to soften the heart, seeing it is the pressure of the Cross, sometimes hardens it; and hard beyond all hope is that heart whose fountains have been stopped by affliction and adversity. But there is one sin which besets all people, rich and poor, prosperous and afflicted, learned and ignorant; one which clings to all persons, cold-hearted men, or men of quick feelings; though of course not in like manner, nor in an equal degree. A sin it is which begins in their childhood, makes them disliked and unhappy, grows with their growth, stands in the way of

every good feeling, and makes many fall short of heaven. This is selfishness : a habit of looking at ourselves, thinking of ourselves, acting for ourselves in every thing, rather than for others, even our friends and neighbours : a dislike to put ourselves out of the way to do them good, to sacrifice our own pleasure and comfort for their sake. But more than this, strange as it may seem, considering what we are, we are selfish towards God. Though all we have, health and life, and the strength of youth and cheerful spirits, food and clothing, the blue heaven and the green earth, and the year with its seasons and its harvests, are from Him and are His, yet we grudge to give Him back the slightest portion of that which He has given us. Though our three thousand sheep<sup>1</sup> and a thousand goats were safe and none missing all the while they were in the open fields, though God's Providence hath been, like David's men, a wall unto our fortunes both by night and day, and though the Church come unto us in a good day for the portion of God and of the poor, yet, like

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. xxv.

Nabal, the man of Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel, our hearts are cold towards God in the midst of our merriment, and at the sound of giving, die within us like a stone. We lay out money, we make sacrifices, we are uneasy, we run risks, we rise early and take late rest, and eat the bread of carefulness, in order to make ourselves rich in this life, to get on in the world, to be above our neighbours, and to be thought well of. Or, if our ambition lies another way, to be wise and learned, a thing in the world's sight more high and pure, and yet all the while as selfish and as little worth as the other, apart from Christ, still there is no sacrifice we will not make, no hardship we will not endure. We will practise mortification and self-denial for learning's sake, but not for Christ's. We will abstain from joys, and pleasures, and company, and numberless indulgences, and put restraint even on our loves, when ambition calls, but not at the bidding of the Church. We will neglect our health and rest, and become worn and pale, and weary, and weak, to gain earthly wisdom and power of intellect, and shorten our lives to leave our names among posterity

lifted some very little, it may be, above the obscurity of the unnumbered dead. But to smooth down the severity of discipline, to have an easy Lent, or go softly through a fast, we are ready to talk of our health, and habits, and way of living, and the hardness of our duty, and the weakness of our flesh, and, in a light way, of the mercy of our God. We are strong to do all things for ourselves, our own ambition strengthening us. We are weak for Christ, even though He be ready to give us strength. It seems quite natural to us that we should take all this pains for worldly good, because we see and feel that it *is* good; we see how it does us good, we see that others think it good, and think good ourselves of those who have it. We certainly have great faith in the world. Would we had as great faith in Christ! We make bold enterprises and run wonderful chances, but then we see it comes back to us again. But we do not see our own souls. We do not see how the seeds of Heaven are putting forth within them, or whether they are dead or dying, or at the least unshapely and unhealthy.

We do not see how the prayers of those to

whom we give alms are doing us good, on high in Heaven, or in the depth of our own souls. We give our money to the Church of Christ, and we do not *see* it come back again ; and why ? Because it comes back in spiritual riches, and spiritual things can only be spiritually discerned. Therefore, because we have little or no faith we are very much dissatisfied about it ; and give away as little in charity as we possibly can. We are selfish towards God. The prayers of the poor on our behalf, we do not see them. Like all good things, they are invisible. Who sees the clouds rise from the earth, that are afterwards to fall in summer showers ? The Sun of righteousness has ridden up on high into the middle heavens, and by a sweet compulsion draws thither to Himself the prayers of all the saints. Day and night the steam and odour go from the face of the earth. It is gathered up by Angels into precious clouds<sup>1</sup>, and falls in dews and showers of grateful freshness, oftentimes on fields far away from those whence it first ascended. Why, then, are our affections set on things we see ? Who

<sup>1</sup> Rev. v. 8.

remembers to have seen an Angel ? Who has seen the Spouse of Christ in her marriage jewels ? Who has seen the Dead when once they went away ? We only linger about their green graves. The best thing we of earth can see, is but the outside of Heaven, and that far off. If our hopes and fears, our joys and wishes and feelings, are not set, and set steadfastly, on things we have not seen but shall see one day, if we are not waiting and trembling for their desirable manifestation at the last, we Christians are of all men in the world the most beguiled and miserable. We are like the forlorn and poor of this life, who fall asleep from weariness and crying, and then dream bright things and golden fortunes all night long, and awake doubly wretched in the morning to their real and substantial misery. The things which are seen are temporal ; and it is because they are but temporal that we see them ; and the things which are not seen are eternal, and it is their eternity which hides them from our view.

There is nothing we dislike so much in other people as selfishness ; and, if we are honest with ourselves, there is nothing to

which we ourselves are more liable. Every body will acknowledge this; so I will not waste time in proving it, nor in showing, what must be obvious, how it keeps us back in our way to Heaven, and does us all manner of harm here as well as hereafter, on earth as well as elsewhere. Let us rather look at what God has done for us, and how He has placed us, so as to protect us from this miserable sin.

We are not set down in the world by ourselves. We cannot move about independent of our neighbour. We cannot live alone. We cannot love ourselves, except as we are reflected in the love of others. We do not like to think of dying alone. Our peace and health and happiness, all depend upon our neighbour. They are more in his power than they are in our own. We see this in many ways. Our neighbour can vex and annoy us every day: he can stand in the way of our getting on: he can say illnatured things of us; and, in a word, if he chooses to act wickedly and maliciously towards us, he can make the world very wretched and miserable to us. Nay more than this, we cannot even keep our souls safe from the harm which our neigh-

bour may do them. Our very souls are put in one another's power. He may do harm to us by not praying for us, by setting an evil example to our children, by frightening us from confessing Christ bravely and openly before men, and the like. His sin may hinder many a blessing which would otherwise have fallen on the city or parish where he dwells. Thus do all we can to keep to ourselves and by ourselves, and to get to Heaven of ourselves and alone, it is impossible. God has so mixed us up with our neighbours, He has so entangled our concerns with their concerns, that we cannot act and live and feel alone. Thus selfishness is made difficult by the law of the world, and by God's arrangement of it. He has so ordered the world that our natural conscience might tell us how unnatural selfishness was; and not the world only, for this is the point I have been all along bringing you to, but He has put down among us the Church of Christ to help us in this very thing, to be a refuge to us from our own selfishness, to be a protection to us against the selfishness of others, to destroy selfishness from one end of the world to the other.

This is a most wonderful blessing if we only thought about it seriously, and like earnest men. Now look at the Prayer Book and the common service of the Church, how little there is in it about ourselves. It is like the Lord's Prayer, the only prayer which Christ Himself taught us to use, and which is in the plural number throughout. For example : what matter, so we might say, does it make to us at this distance and in our humble stations, whether the Queen is religious or not ? It is not likely, so we think when we think selfishly, it is not likely she could do us much harm, or interfere with *our* being religious. Yet the Church makes us pray for her twice in the Morning Prayer, once in the Litany, once in the Communion Service, twice when there is the Holy Communion ; and twice in the evening prayer. So at the least the Church makes us pray four times a day for the Queen, which we should never have thought of doing ourselves. This is one way in which the Church prevents our being selfish in our prayers ; because to the Church at large it is a matter of immense importance that the Lord's anointed should be religious, and have reli-

gious people about her. So in our private prayers we should never have thought of praying for the nobility and the magistrates, perhaps not even for our fathers the Bishops. We should often have neglected the sick and afflicted, in far off countries as well as at home : prisoners, captives, travellers, young children and the like. We should not have given up so much of our time to praising God in psalms, as we do in Church. Thus the Church is continually leading our thoughts to any body rather than ourselves. She is continually trying to make us unselfish. Indeed the whole of religion is a looking out of ourselves unto Christ, whether as He is ascended to the Right Hand of the Father, or as He is reflected in the feeble shinings of His saints, or represented to us by the poor and desolate. Still it is a looking out of ourselves.

So for the same great end, among others, we have festivals in honour of the Dead : the blessed Virgin, the holy Apostles and other saints, yea, all the saints of God. The thought of the dead makes us gentle and childlike, and leads us to forget ourselves, as well it may. For we know that, according to St. Paul's

teaching, the spirits of just men made perfect are not far from us. We are come to them and they are come to us. They can touch us and we can touch them: perchance do touch them when we know it not; they are gliding by every hour. The spirit has but ceased to act upon and through the body, and so we do not see them in their places. They keep threading in and out among us, going up and down, and moving round about us: especially, so we believe from St. John, in holy Churches where their bodies rest in hope<sup>1</sup>. They are the first ranks of the Church who have gone before us in the Lord, so far as to be out of sight. They are beyond our view. They may see us: we cannot see them. This should make us speak very little and surely very cautiously of the Dead, and not without the warrant of the Church: whether they be our own kindred, or saints of old, or holy men of later times. All the dead are our kindred now; for there is no marrying or giving in marriage in the Church invisible. We cannot feel selfish among the Dead; and

<sup>1</sup> Rev. vi.

in the Church of Christ we are among the Dead.

Then again the blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ kills selfishness within us, because it keeps drawing us further and further into the communion of saints. It is a hand put forth, and taking us back into the ark from time to time continually. It makes us every one members one of another in the mystical body ; for we, St. Paul teaches us, “ We being many are one bread and one body ; for we are all partakers of that one bread<sup>1</sup>. ” Thus the Church sets herself against all selfish views, all narrow opinions, all vanity, conceit, childishness, self-praise, uncharitableness, little-mindedness ; it gives us great thoughts ; it opens out views of heaven ; it promises glorious and magnificent things which shall be hereafter ; it leads us to the throne of God ; it joins with Angels and Archangels and all the company of Heaven about the Altar ; it feeds us with the Body of our Lord : and what have they to do with selfishness who feed thereon ?

In like manner the holy doctrines on which

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. x. 17.

the Church is founded, and the history of the heresies by which those doctrines have been assailed, warn us very fearfully against selfishness and selfish times. The great and foremost doctrine of Church teaching is the Incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This comes uppermost in her Creeds; this comes uppermost in her best and soundest doctors. The Church does, as it were, in all her gifts and offices set forth and embody after a living way the Incarnation of the Lord. It is in the Church, says one, that Jesus Christ is re-appearing always, and is living eternally. The Church is, as it were, the abiding, continuing, and going on of the Incarnation of the Son of God. Christ is one and the same and always unchanging ; and so He has made His Church one. He is made flesh, and has taken an outward form ; and so He has made His Church visible. He, as our Mediator, is God ; and so He has made His Church indefectible. He is an eternal Priest ; and so He has made His Church to have no end. But, if we look at some of the schools of theology which sprung up abroad in the sixteenth century, we find quite other doctrines coming uppermost; not that the doctrine of the In-

carnation of the Lord is denied (God forbid !), only it does not occupy the place it did in the harmonious teaching of ancient times. Original sin, grace, free-will, election, assurance, come in Lutheran and Zwinglian writers, where in the Fathers we should find references to the Incarnation, and the Sacraments by which it is conveyed to us and given us, as St. Leo expresses it, "as a step for us to tread upon, that we by It may ascend to Him<sup>1</sup>." The effect of this difference, of this distortion of the analogy of faith, is, that by putting over-prominently and exclusively forward questions concerning our own soul, and the effects wrought in it, it leads to excessive self-contemplation, and so lowers the standard of holiness by weakening the temper of faith. Thus even in this Catholic country, some have been found of late years, who have drawn up what they deemed a full confession of their faith ; in which, notwithstanding, no statement whatever was made regarding the Divinity of the Three Persons of the most Holy Trinity, or the union of the divine and human Natures in our blessed

<sup>1</sup> Serm. v. de Nativ.

Lord. This is an awful warning. The same lesson may be learnt even from the course which heresy pursued in early times. While the primitive fires burnt hottest and clearest, the Church had power and health to eject all heresy from out of her, and leave it to rage and spend itself beyond the consecrated precincts. But afterwards, while she was still adorned by gifts, and graces, and eminent lights, heresy began assailing what was uppermost in men's thoughts, the Trinity and the Person of our Lord. Thus Arianism, the greatest of these, was condemned at Nice, A. D. 325, which was not far from a hundred years before Pelagius began in the West to teach his heresy about grace and original sin<sup>1</sup>. The class of controversies which afflicted the Church in the fourth century, concerned mysteries out of men's selves ; those which concerned mysteries within themselves did not begin till the fifth century. One began in the Eastern Church, the other in the Western ; both probably were raised on questions uppermost in men's minds at the time ; and thus it took four centuries to bring down the lofty

<sup>1</sup> About A.D. 405.

minds of Christians to question and cavil, and go wrong about themselves, their nature, and the operations of their souls. This rather, as we find it in St. Hilary<sup>1</sup>, would be the way an ancient Christian would have looked at human nature, always in the incarnate Word, never apart from Him ; as “human nature, in Christ, advancing towards God, going onwards to eternity, and through eternity about to abide the consummate image of the Creator.” So long was selfishness in breaking into and disturbing Church doctrine.

Selfishness, too, is effectually warred against and cast out by the temper, which it is the Church’s office to give birth to and bring about within us,—the Catholic temper. It is by this temper which God has given her, and which she would fain communicate to her sons, that the Church Universal has been “exalted like a palm tree in Engaddi, and as a rose plant in Jericho, as a fair olive tree in a pleasant field, and as a plane tree by the water<sup>2</sup>,” and filled with God’s wisdom, “as

<sup>1</sup> De Trin. xi. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Ecclus. xxiv.

Phison and as Tigris in the time of the new fruits." This is the temper by which partition walls are broken down, and the earth made one and of one speech, and the curse of Babel turned aside, and the miracle of Pentecost made abiding. The narrow views of politicians, and their still narrower jealousies, literary theories of national characters, and attempts after union, such as conquerors or men of science weakly strive to gain, are all broken through and swept away, and set at nought by this temper, of which we speak. The world at times has seen this temper living and working, and it has feared it and obeyed it. But now the Body of Christ is torn asunder, and the members war against each other, and endeavour to be by themselves ; and thereof has come weakness, disease, slumbering, and fearful dejection in men's souls. Time was in Europe when the Church was free to have the same rites, and pray the same prayers all over. It may not be so now. Time was when foreigners, travellers, and merchants went here and there, and found in every place his own Church, priest, Altar, home. It is not so now. Let us see this well illustrated.

“There was nothing new, or strange, or singular, about the burial procession particularly calculated to excite the attention of Marco Polo. The ‘*De Profundis*’ of the stoled priest spake the universal language adopted by the most sublime of human compositions, the Liturgy of Western Christendom. Yet, though no objects appeared which could awaken any lively curiosity in the traveller, there was much in their very familiarity to excite the sympathy of the wanderer in a foreign land. With an altered tone he said to the friar, ‘Saddened is the spirit of the pilgrim, by the dying twilight and the plaining vesper bell. But he who braves every danger for himself, may feel his heart sink within him when the pageant of triumphant death brings to his mind the thought, that those from whom, as he weened, he parted for a little while only, may have been already borne to the sepulchre. Yet there is also a great and enduring comfort to the traveller in Christendom. However uncouth may be the speech of the races amongst whom the pilgrim sojourns, however diversified may be the customs of the regions which he visits, let him

enter the portal of the Church, or hear, as I do now, the voice of the minister of the Gospel, and he is present with his own, though alps and oceans may sever them asunder. There is one spot where the pilgrim always finds his home. We are all one people when we come before the Altar of the Lord<sup>1</sup>.” Now this is what we have lost; this is what all good men are sickening for the want of, what all good men must in their measure strive to bring back again, by cultivating in his own heart, and carrying out in his own modest practice, the Catholic temper. He must not look at his particular Church, as if, like his country, it were an island. He must not let his sympathy, or love, or admiration be confined within any bounds short of the Church Universal. He must feel as the Church Universal feels. He must teach as the Church Universal teaches, and ever has taught. He must pray God for the time when he may worship as the Church Universal worshipped. He must guard the faith jealously, as the salutary deposit handed on to him; but

<sup>1</sup> Palgrave, Merchant and Friar, p. 138.

he must shun the close, bitter, schismatical spirit of controversy, that spirit which is nothing but “the disquieting of good men, and the forgetfulness of good turns.” He must throw himself out of systems, sects, schools, parties, into the free, capacious teaching and temper of the Church Universal. Thus by God’s grace may the sundered members of His Church begin to stir, and move, and come one to another, and join themselves, and live anew ; and the shape and outline and attitude, which long past centuries had known, shall gradually grow clearer, more forcible, and more distinct before men’s eyes, lovely and venerable. Then shall the Church be again informed by the Catholic temper, “the understanding spirit, holy, one only, manifold, subtil, lively, clear, undefiled, plain, not subject to hurt, loving the thing that is good, quick, which cannot be letted, ready to do good, kind to man, stedfast, sure, free from care, having all power, overseeing all things, and going through all understanding, pure, and most subtil, spirits<sup>1</sup>.” This is the Catholic temper, the temper of the

<sup>1</sup> Wisdom vii. viii.

Church, who is “more moving than any motion : she passeth and goeth through all things by reason of her pureness. She is a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty ; therefore can no defiled thing fall into her. And being but one, she can do all things : and remaining in herself, she maketh all things new : and in all ages entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God and prophets : and in that she is conversant with God, she magnifieth her nobility.” Such is the Church Catholic, the Bride of Christ. Such shall she one day be seen to be.

Lastly the Church itself, the way it is left with us and trusted to us, teaches us very forcibly how hateful selfishness is in God’s sight. Christ gave His Name, the only one under heaven whereby men can be saved. But He did not leave it to every man’s judgment what to think of His great Name, how to believe in Him, with what rites He was to be worshipped, and the like. He did not leave the faith with this man or that man, or any set of men. He left it with the Church, with the Church only, the Church Catholic, one and entire ; and made it impossible it should be

pure and whole anywhere out of the Church, or any where short of the Church. In Scripture language the Church was to be the pillar and ground of the truth : the *pillar*, as bearing it up and witnessing to it and keeping it safe and not letting the world reach it to lower it or do it violence ; the *ground*, as being the authority on which the truth rests, the lawful and very sufficient evidence upon which men are to receive it. Now in this view it is clear the Church is of immense importance ; the salvation of all generations depends upon it. What means then did our Saviour ordain for handing the Church on from one generation to another, for preserving it amid storms and persecutions, for enabling it by its own inward purity to overcome the world and to save alive the souls of those within its gates ? Visible miracles gradually ceased, that is to say, they were not put forward in the same way they were before. God did not visibly interfere ; heretics and blasphemers were not always struck dead as by a miracle, though here and there God did interpose, and the world wondered. Still as a general rule, it was left to men, to our fathers, to us, to hand on the

Church, to leave the old faith as we received it. This was the law : “ Tell ye your children of it; and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation.” Thus the Church was made to depend on us, the salvation of all generations was made to depend on us. This is a fearful thought, almost too fearful to bear. The salvation of all after generations depends on us. And yet we are careless about it, ungenerous, little-minded, sparing, selfish in saving souls.

Yet still we have among us the Church, which is a refuge from our selfishness : and she is from time to time calling upon us to exercise this privilege of taking refuge with her by our alms. We are for ever being called upon to aid in handing on the Gospel, the one sound faith, the wisdom hidden from of old, to our posterity. We are invited to be fellow-workmen with Apostles, primitive confessors, martyrs, bishops, saints, men who raised dead bodies, workers of miracles, lords over evil spirits, mighty teachers, masters in Israel. This was their office to hand on the faith, to teach it to those who came after them, to feed the

little ones of Christ. Such was the task which they were foremost in; and to this day we make mention of their names with reverence, because of their faithfulness in their generation. Surely this is a great privilege for such unloving Christians as we are, full of ourselves, full of the world's taint, full of earth and all that is therein. Yet there is no danger of selfishness intruding here. We do not come out from others in this. We are not singular. We are not ostentatious. We are but a few of many, of whom God taketh count, and watcheth their hands and hearts as they go by to the treasury of the temple. The brightest saint in God's kingdom has no temptation to selfishness. He is but one, one little one, among the thousand stars that are thickly sown, like seeds of light, all over the dark skies, waiting for a still more glorious brightness, when they shall grow and shine in the kingdom of their Father, when the heavens shall be new, and the face of the earth covered with another freshness, being baptized with fire. We are not to ask ourselves where our self-denial is to end, when we have done enough, when the measure of our sacrifice is full. This

is the spirit of a slave rather than a son. It is never full. There is never self-denial enough ; all is self-denial in the school of Christ. We have a life in our veins, we have not laid that down yet beneath the Cross. The blood of martyrdom would not fill the cup. The martyrs themselves are but unprofitable servants, though they are as Angels in our eyes. Why are we clinging to these perishable things ? Surely we do not love them. Our home is not here. It is very far away, we are pining for it. We are athirst for God.

But perchance it may be said, this is an unnatural state. We *do* love these things ; “we have set our hearts, it cannot be concealed, we have set them fondly on earth, and the green things and the bright things that are upon the earth.” It cannot be. You cannot love the world nor the world you. The Cross has been planted in your hearts. You and the world, you and your affections, you and your idols must part for ever, part in the blood that flowed where the stern Cross went deepest in. You and all your dreams must part, O ye of the Christian Circumcision!

The kingdom of Heaven is within you.

You are not your own. You are lifted above yourselves. You are washed with a heavenly washing. You have the gift, which is above all other gifts, the gift of the justified, the Presence of God within you. Ever since the time that you were fearfully and wonderfully made into sons of God and heirs of heaven, this inward kingdom has been unfolding itself in your souls. First one and then another of your lusts and affections have been mastered. Sacraments, providences, ordinances, discipline, ascetic habits, sometimes slowly, sometimes swiftly, all have been drawing your natural infirmities more and more within the power of this supernatural kingdom. The heart is like a tract of barren country, hardly recovered to fertility. Still, year after year, every prayer and act of faith, every self-denial and suffering, has been taking in some little portion from the wilderness. Angry tempers, idleness, childish sins, bad habits clinging about us and hindering us, are by degrees brought under the dominion of our new nature. The kingdom of Satan grows narrower day by day, though here and there the waste brown sand again encroaches on

the green. Our very sins themselves alter, and evil as they are and impure, still disclose to us the presence of virtue in the soil. They witness to our being more or less religious. We are being transformed into Angels, and more than Angels, though suffering here. Yea, more than Angels, for when we wake up at the last to sleep no more for ever, we shall be satisfied with His likeness Who *was* Man, and and *is* Man, and Who has our nature upon Him where He is. We shall be in some high sense like Him, else could not we endure to see Him as He is. How fearful to think of what unknown operations our regenerate but still striving souls are now the scene and the place. That inward kingdom is unfolding itself there. But selfishness is hindering it. Self is keeping back its glory and its power. Self is making it jealous of opening out and disclosing itself. Self is struggling against the Spirit and the Sacraments. Therefore deny that self, and the empire of Christ will stretch forth from the river even unto the great sea, from Baptism until eternity begins. Therefore mortify, treat hardly, and bring under that evil self, and then will that inward kingdom be

like the rising of the sun behind the hills. The morning will sweetly invade the night. The lines of darkness will fade off and be overrun with light. "It shall be," in the words of 'him who was raised up on high'<sup>1</sup>, "as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."

Clear on all of us, and clearly shining was our baptismal rain. But the spirit of selfishness has passed upon us since. We are stained with sad impurities. We are beaten back in our upward flight by weakness and self-indulgence. We are laden with our sins. The burden of them is intolerable. Self has taken such hold upon us that we are not able to look up. We think holy thoughts; and then unhallow them by telling them to others, that they may see how great our thoughts are. We watch and fast, and are fain our faces should grow pale, that men may see how austere our watching and our fasting are. We give alms, alms after the fashion of these latter times, in public and with our names,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. xxiii. 4.

that men may wonder we can give so much, and think of all the self-denial it must cost us. Self is in every thing. The hundred gates of the heart may be shut against open sins, but self goes in and out thereat unquestioned day and night. Thus it is that self becomes hateful to us. We are weary of our own littleness and meanness. We are contemptible to ourselves. We groan, being burdened, and are miserable; yet we have not courage to throw ourselves away from ourselves. O what a poor and miserable Christianity is this! How often do we think, when self intrudes, of our early Baptism, and its innocent liberty, and its self-forgetting quietness; we think of the Font that is by the entering in of the Church, and long with a holy longing, and cry with David, "O that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate! And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David<sup>1</sup>." And we have THREE, mightier than men, unto Whom

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam xxiii. 15.

we were baptized, to break through the hosts and bring us water from the consecrated Well. Let us leave our selfishness behind, and go and take refuge there. Alms, said an old martyr, are the imitation of our baptism, and win the indulgence of God. Alms repair its freshness. By alms do we absolve ourselves from sin. Alms, as one of the ancients teaches, are a second baptism. “Give alms,” said our Lord ; “ Give alms of such things as ye have, and behold, all things are clean unto you<sup>1</sup>. ” Let us come continually out of a free heart, to pass the watchword, the Cross of Christ, along the invisible lines of after generations. We have a right to deny ourselves for Christ ; a right to suffer with the Incarnate Son, and purify selfishness away by suffering. In the quiet courts of the alms-giving Church we may take sanctuary from ourselves.

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke xi. 41.

THE END.

*Lately published,*

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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# CHURCH DOCTRINE,

A WITNESS

## AGAINST WORLDLY TIMES.

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BY THE REV.

FREDERICK W. FABER, M.A.

FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit.—Acts xxiii. 8.

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## CHURCH DOCTRINE,

A

### WITNESS AGAINST WORLDLY TIMES.

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WE live in very worldly times. No one can doubt this who hears or reads ever so little of what is going on around him. The times are very worldly. We are wiser than our fore-fathers, but only in the ways of getting riches. Trade and noise, ships, railways, roads, changes here and changes there, all sorts of wild plans and dreams, we hear of continually, we hear of nothing else. The world speaks of nothing else, thinks of nothing else. Men of business, from sunrise to sunset, are making money. Their hours are all spent in writing letters, in keeping accounts, in going to public meetings and so on. Men in power are struggling to keep their enemies out of power ; planning, scheming, debating, toiling continually. Then for people who have less to do, there are theatres, races, balls,

gambling-houses, and a hundred other sinful pleasures. All these are the sort of things newspapers are so full of. We might almost think the world was going to last for ever, and that people never died: only we read there the names of people who have just died, and thus the world in its own newspapers witnesses against itself. Now when we read or hear of all these things, of all this early rising and taking late rest, and eating the bread of carelessness, it must sometimes come across us, "When do these people find time to save their souls? when do they pray? when do they repent? when do they hate the world? when do they despise its honours? when do they neglect its gold and silver, or sell all they have and give unto the poor? when do they find time to be Christians? How strange to be sure it all seems--I wonder what the end of it all will be!"—Or in another way, we may fancy an Angel looking down upon London or one of our great cities, and seeing the ways of living among the people, their greediness and avarice, and worldliness and sin, would he be easily brought to believe that all those men were in the middle of a hot battle, of a deadly

fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil? Really it is fearful to see how the world goes on, so high, so careless, so proud, so antichristian, as if were there no Holy Trinity, no Heaven, no Cross, no Angels, no Dead Men, no Churches. It is fearful. But there will be an end of it all; and that end will be more fearful still.—God give us grace to hate it with deep and perfect hatred! It is His enemy.

This is the world then, which we see. It wishes to be seen. It does not hide itself. It is proud of itself. It thinks itself fair and beautiful, and glorious and wise, like Jezebel with her painted face. But there are other people, a few at any rate, perhaps many, God only knoweth, who do not live in this world, in the devil's world, but in Christ's Church: people who cluster quietly around the Cross of Christ in prayer and repentance. They go to their daily labour in the fields, or in the counting-house, or at the manufactory, just as other people do, nay, more regularly, more industriously, more soberly than others. But their hearts are not there. They are set on things above. They

live in heaven. They are being with Christ, they are one with Him and He with them, their life is hid with Him in God. Their souls are swelling with immortal hopes, and what are this world's brightest things to them ? The loud and merry noises of the world are as little to them as the running of a stream, for the song of angels is ever in their ears. They have a different sun and moon from other men. For the Lamb of God is Himself their bright and shining Sun, and the Church, through which He shines and sheds His beauty, is their faithful and perpetual Moon.

Now it is clear we must all grant that the times are very worldly. We must all see that people who live the sort of life we read of in the newspapers, cannot think much about their souls. But then some of us who have neither honours nor riches nor business, may not exactly see how all this concerns us or what we have to do with it. The times are worldly it is true. But what is that to us ? We did not make them so. We cannot help it. They can do us no harm. They cannot make us worldly. Now this is just the very thing I wish you to see. The times being worldly

does very much concern us. They can do us harm. They do make us worldly. We are concerned in it many ways ; it makes God angry with us as a nation, it may make Him punish our children for it—it tempts us to be worldly, it tempts our friends and relations and makes them worldly, and does a great deal of mischief to our bodies and souls which we cannot now see or understand. So then, though we may have neither honours nor wealth, nor business, yet are we very much concerned in the times being worldly : and a very great duty it is for all of us to protect ourselves against their worldliness, and keep it at a distance ; which God, blessed be His Holy Name, gives us the means of doing in His Son's Church.

When we say the times are worldly, we mean that people are always thinking of and loving things they see, things seen, things temporal, things that profit them here and are not much set by in heaven : times when people think of riches, honour, power, happiness and mirth, of life and health and good spirits, of elegance and comfort, and beauty, and love, and prosperity, of eating and drinking, marrying

and giving in marriage ; times when people do *not* think of death, of judgment, of Baptism, of Bibles, of Churches, of Holy Communions, of constant prayer, of fastings and watchings, of self-denial and hard penance. Worldly times are times when all the world, but a few, seem to have agreed with each other to forget all these things, and to say nothing about them; not to take the trouble to deny them, but simply to forget them. This is worldliness.

Now all the doctrines of the Church are opposed to worldliness. The Church herself is the world's enemy. She is set down in the earth by Christ to fight with the world and to get the better of it : which she will do because of the Holy Ghost Who is with her and in her. But there are some particular portions of Christian truth, which recommend themselves to us, as leading us from the world, lifting us above it, making us humble with great thoughts and cheerful with great hopes: doctrines which carry us off from ourselves, and save us from selfishness, which is meanness. Among these are the doctrines of Angels and communion with the Dead. The Church calls us on St. Michael's day to meditate on the wonderful

order of Angels ; and if we have made right use of that day year by year, doubtless we have been saved from many bad thoughts and evil wishes ; for all God's truth has a blessing along with it to do us good and make us pure. Again, the Feast of All Saints, leads us to the solemn consideration of communion with the Dead ; and to think of it in this light as a safeguard against worldliness.

These two subjects of sacred thought, the holy Angels and the Dead, are great safeguards to us in these days. The noise of the world, the bustle of commerce, the pride of science, our self-praise, our flattery of one another, our foolish complacency in our national greatness, our idolatrous worship of success in life ; all these are so many humours of an age that has forgotten the Invisible World which surrounds us, and is among us. We treat God's works lightly, and give profane judgments upon them, and even venture to praise them for their adaptation to man's moral or mental being. We have forgotten our own place in God's sight, as grievously corrupt and very far departed from original righteousness. We do not remember that our

only dignity is in our being knit up with the invisible world of spirit, and joined to a spiritual brotherhood, through Christ our Head; and that our greatness is in our contempt of earth, and all it has to give or show. It is an age of intellect-worship, of gross material views, of money-making, and of a poor, heaven-forgetting science. For science, surely, if it were true and right, should deepen our humility, seeing that its discoveries keep adding to the number of half-truths and natural mysteries far beyond what they contribute to the stock of definite knowledge. The fear or love of beings and things invisible is counted either poetry and so harmless, or superstition and so contemptible. And we are thus led by the cold and rigid temper of the age to lower the mystery of our Lord's Person, His Church, and His gifts, the Sacraments; and, as to the Angels and the Dead, we do not deem it worth while to think much about them. They do us no good, and they are beyond our doing them good. So we say. We are angry if people try to make more of them. Ease and luxury and literary self-congratulation want to have as little of a spiritual world interfering

with them in this life as possible. Now as one instance of the way in which Church doctrine witnesses against worldly times, let us take the Church's giving us two feast-days, one in which to think about the Angels, another in which to meditate upon the Dead.

I. *The holy Angels.* I will not bring together here the teaching of Scripture regarding the order and offices of Angels; although it is now-a-days little attended to, and would astonish many people if fairly drawn out. Yet one is not certain that it might not provoke ridicule, and so give occasion to grievous sin in such as are light-minded. Those who wish to gain deeply practical, consoling, and elevating views on the subject, may be drawn thereto by the services and lessons appointed by the Church for the Feast of St. Michael. In this place I rather wish to treat the doctrine as a witness against worldly times, to set forth the way in which our thoughts should be influenced by it in privacy, at our prayers or our readings, on our beds by night, in our walks, in the company of those we love, on our journeys, in churches, or at times in mixed society, when the conversation becomes any

way unchaste, or runs into inexpedient jesting or light words about the Church and her customs, when God's Name falls unthinkingly from any one, when low views are put forward, or worldly perplexing arguments are forced uncourteously upon religious people. In all such cases the thought of the Angels may keep us safe from taint, where one would be backward to invite thoughts more high and awful still. Now for fear anything which might be said should seem what people call poetical, by which they mean unreal and not binding, the doctrine, viewed as a witness against worldly times, shall be stated in the language of Bishop Bull, one of the gravest Doctors of the modern English Church, and of all men, from the frame of his mind as well as his deep learning, least likely to be carried away by poetry, or drawn unawares into beautiful but untheological language.

"It is true indeed," says the Bishop<sup>1</sup>, "the good Angels do not now ordinarily appear in visible forms, or speak by audible voices to

<sup>1</sup> i. 293. Oxford Edition.

men, as in ancient times they did. After God had once spoken unto men by His Own Son, manifested in the flesh, and by Him fully revealed His will to the world, and confirmed that revelation by a long succession of unquestionable miracles, there was no such need of angelical appearances, for the instruction, consolation, and confirmation of the faithful. The succeeding ages do indeed afford us very credible relations of some such apparitions now and then; but ordinarily, I say, the government of Angels over us is now administered in a secret and invisible manner. Hence too many have been inclined either flatly to deny, or at least to call in question, the truth of the doctrine we are now upon. But they have souls very much immersed in flesh, who can apprehend nothing but what touches and affects their senses; and they that follow this gross and sensual way of procedure, must at last necessarily fall into downright epicurism, to deny all particular Providence of God over the sons of men, and to ascribe all events to those causes that are next to them.

“ But besides, although the ministry of Angels be now for the most part invisible, yet

to the observant it is not altogether indiscernible.

“ We may trace the footsteps of this secret Providence over us in many instances, of which I shall note a few. How often may we have observed strong, lasting, and irresistible impulses upon our minds to do certain things we can scarce for the present tell why or wherefore, the reason and good success of which we afterwards plainly see ? So, on the contrary, there are oftentimes sudden and unexpected accidents, as we call them, cast in our way, to divert us from certain enterprises we are just ready to engage in, the ill consequences whereof we do afterwards, but not till then, apprehend. Again, How strange many times are our present thoughts and suggestions in sudden and surprising dangers ! We then upon the spot resolve and determine as well as if we had a long time deliberated, and taken the best advice and counsel ; and we ourselves afterwards wonder how such thoughts came into our minds. Hither also we may refer that lucky conspiracy of circumstances, which we sometimes experience in our affairs and business, otherwise of great

difficulty ; when we light upon the *nick of opportunity* ; when the persons, whose counsel or assistance we most need, strangely occur, and all things fall out according to our desire, but beyond our expectation. What strange ominous bodings and fears do many times on a sudden seize upon men of certain approaching evils, whereof at present there is no visible appearance ! And have we not had some unquestionable instances of men not inclined to melancholy, strongly and unalterably persuaded of the near approach of their death, so as to be able punctually to tell the very day of it, when they have been in good health, and neither themselves nor their friends could discern any present natural cause for such a persuasion, and yet the event proved, that they were not mistaken ? And although I am no doter on dreams, yet I verily believe, that some dreams are monitory, above the power of fancy, and impressed upon us by some superior influence. For of such dreams, we have plain and undenial instances in history, both sacred and profane, and in our own age and observation. Nor shall I so value the laughter of sceptics, and the scoffs

of the Epicureans, as to be ashamed to profess, that I myself have had some convincing experiments of such impressions. Now it is no enthusiasm, but the best account that can be given of them, to ascribe these things to the ministry of those invisible instruments of God's Providence, that guide and govern our affairs and concerns, namely, the Angels of God.

“ However it is most certain, that the holy Angels are appointed by Divine Providence as the guardians of good men (as, and whilst they are such) in all their ways, and throughout the whole course of their lives. For of this, as you have heard, the Holy Scriptures (to which we have all the reason in the world to give credit) often and most expressly speak; and the wiser heathens themselves acknowledged as much, though they called those blessed instruments of God's Providence over the virtuous by other names than we do, as by that of ‘good geniuses,’ and the like, as hath been before observed.

“ This theme of Angelical Ministry is indeed very pregnant, and hath administered abundant matter to exercise the more curious wits,

who have raised very many questions about it of more subtlety than profit.

“ But for my own part, being truly conscious to myself of my infirmity, and believing that what I discourse at this time of the ministry of the holy Angels, I deliver in the presence of some of those heavenly Ministers, I shall be very careful to keep myself within the bounds of modesty and sobriety.”

II. *Fellowship with the Dead.* This is the doctrine of All Saints’ Day, as that of the holy Angels ‘is of St. Michael’s.’ It is not a doctrine the world likes to think upon. It leads our thoughts to a place and a time, where all the world values most, has vanished away. It is continually drawing our affections heavenwards; and making us so cheerful and contented in ourselves that we stand in no need of the world’s noisy mirth and loud happiness. We are not alone in our Christian course. We on earth do not make up the whole of Christ’s Church. We are but a small part of it. All the holy men who ever lived since Christ ascended up on high, in Europe, Asia, and Africa, belong to it still in that place of rest where now they

are, in Abraham's bosom. All those who, like their Lord, were crucified, or beheaded, or broken on wheels, or eaten by lions, or frozen in ice, or consumed in cruel fires, all these belong to it, belong to us, hold communion with us, and we with them. All the good and holy men of England are in it likewise; and England in old time was proverbially the "land of saints." Europe called it so. Many kings and queens have been born and reigned and died; years have rolled away, great changes have been made all over the island; but all the holy bishops, lords, doctors, priests, and poor people, who there are equal to the highest, for none are poor in Christ, Who is Himself unsearchable riches, all these, though they are dead, may hold communion with us and we with them. When the Churches we worship in are as full as they will hold, how little is the company within, compared with the silent and invisible congregation of dead men. They all hold communion with us, and we with them. The world has got a bad, cold heart. It is sometimes very kind to people while it sees them, but when they go away it forgets them. It cannot remember anything

out of sight. It forgets the dead. But surely it must be an unaffectionate thing, yea, a great sin, to forget the dead. They have gone nearer Christ than we are. They see greater things than we see. They are safe from the world, which we are not. Surely the memories of the holy dead are greatly to be honoured and had in remembrance among us. You would not like to be told, if any of you had lost a very dear friend, that you would soon forget him, and be as happy as ever you were, and not be sad when you saw his grave, nor think of him every year when the day of his death came round. It would not seem affectionate. Yet surely we all do something of this sort when we forget our brethren departed in the Lord. Now let us see what sort of feelings Holy Scripture expects us to have towards the Dead. A few passages will be enough to show that we ought to think a good deal about them; and that is all I wish to show just now; I shall say nothing of their state; of what we owe them, or what they may do for us. This will be enough to teach us how the continual quiet thought of them would keep the world out of our hearts.

St. Paul, in contrasting the Christian with the Jewish Church, gives us a list of all the great and glorious things to which the Church brings us, as members of the Body of Christ. Ye are come, he saith not, ye shall come, or ye may come if ye are holy, but "Ye are come<sup>1</sup>," come already, "to Mount Sion and the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." This is a very plain passage. Then again we are taught, if one member of Christ's Body<sup>2</sup> suffer, then all the members suffer with it, or one member be joyful, all the members rejoice with it. Thus the invisible Church, the Dead in the Lord, who are more honourable members of His Body than we are, suffer and rejoice with the Church on earth, and hold communion with it. We on earth are or ought to be anxious with a holy impatience for the end of this world and the filling of the thrones, and the coming of Christ's kingdom. We pray every day in the Lord's Prayer, Thy kingdom come, and we ought to live up to what we pray, or any-how

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xii. 22.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 26.

try to make our words real. Now the Dead also as well as ourselves are impatient for the coming of Christ's kingdom ; for from underneath the Altar they cry, How long<sup>1</sup>? So again Holy Scripture leads our thoughts towards the Dead in another way, for two opposite reasons. The Dead leave their sins behind them, and the living are punished for them. Diligent, hard-working sons are often punished for the sins of drunken fathers, long after their death. Their property is spent and lost, or their good name gone, or diseases inherited, or a hundred other miserable consequences of sin and chambering and wantonness. So, for example, we are all of us punished for Adam's sin. His sin, because it was the first sin, never dies. It has lived all along. We are conceived in it, and born in it, and were it not for Holy Baptism, we should all be lost in it, as many still are wilfully in spite of Baptism. Therefore it is, because of what is said in the second commandment, I will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, that in the Litany we say, Remember not, Lord, our

<sup>1</sup> Rev. vi. 10.

offences nor the offences of our forefathers. This then is a very good reason why we should think much and often of the Dead: we are concerned in their sins and the punishment thereof. But we should think of the Dead too for a quite opposite reason: that we often reap the blessings of their piety and goodness. All things, good words, good works, good thoughts, all things which have Christ in them are fruitful and multiply. They are never done multiplying. God will "keep the good deeds of man as the apple of the eye, and give repentance to his sons and daughters<sup>1</sup>." Thus many a time was Judah spared the punishment of sin, for David's sake, for My servant David's sake, saith the Almighty. God loved David, and David's goodness was graciously and mercifully allowed by God to stand as a reason why Judah should be spared yet awhile. So too in the Christian Church there was a time when the wicked Roman emperor Dioclesian tried to burn all the Bibles in the world. He ruled almost in every country, and he gave orders that on a certain day all the bishops and priests should bring the Bibles

<sup>1</sup> Eccl. xvii. 22.

of their Churches to the heathen magistrates to be destroyed. Now in those days there was no printing, and so books were very scarce indeed ; so that it would not have been at all hard for a Roman emperor to have got them all into his power and made away with them. But God put it into the heart of most of His servants, the bishops and priests, to hide the copies of the Holy Bible, and to bury them or send them away to be kept by people who would never be suspected of having them. The emperor had the bishops and priests tortured and imprisoned, and put many to death to frighten them. But Christ was with them and strengthened them. They would not reveal the secret, and the Bibles were preserved. Now what would have been our religious condition, if the emperor had had his will, if the bishops and priests had been cowardly men, or counted their lives dear unto themselves, and had not suffered sharp pains and long tortures for Christ's sake ? We are now enjoying the fruits of their courage and holy deaths. In low spirits, in affliction, in sickness, we can turn to our Bibles, and get new hope continually and fresh light springing up in our

hearts from them. It is so easy we never imagine it could have been otherwise. Yet it *might* have been so, had it not been for the holy piety and strong zeal of those bishops and priests hundreds of years ago. Now is it right, is it gentle, is it affectionate, to forget these holy Dead ? ought we not, as soon as we hear of their goodness, to praise God for it, and to think affectionately of them ? So too, to come nearer home to ourselves, people often derive great blessings in this life from religious fathers and grandfathers : not only from their good example or good teaching, but after their deaths. Other men respect us and do us good, and help us in difficulties and are kind to us, because of the religiousness of our dead relations. Surely then it is a cold-hearted and ungrateful thing to forget them, or to think little and seldom about them. Here then is another very good reason for thinking much about the Dead : their goodness lives after them, and we are concerned in it, and in the reward thereof.

Now, of course, if any one wants to know what Scripture means and wishes about any thing, he would naturally and at once go to the Church to learn. This is what our Saviour ap-

pointed as the Church's office, to be "the pillar and ground of the truth :" to lead His members and her children into His truth. The Church does not teach anything contrary to Scripture, and we also may not interpret Scripture contrary to her. So then we think that if Scripture intended us to think often and much about the Dead, our Church in the Prayer Book will teach us to do so. And this is the case. At the Holy Communion we bless God's " holy Name for all His servants departed this life in His faith and fear ; beseeching Him to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of His heavenly kingdom ;" and then again we pray, "most humbly beseeching Thee to grant that by the merits and passion of Thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in His Blood, we and all Thy whole Church (of which of course the Dead are the largest and most important part) may obtain remission of our sins and all other benefits of His Passion :" and in the Burial Service we pray God to hasten His kingdom, "that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of Thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss.

both in body and soul, in Thine eternal and everlasting glory."

This then is the way in which Holy Scripture and the Church teach us to regard the Dead and think about them, and hold communion with them, and long after them, and follow their good examples. Now let us see the holy fruits which this duty, rightly performed, would produce in our life and conversation.

Thinking of the Dead would keep us from worldliness and selfishness. While our thoughts and affections are set steadily on the things of an unseen world, we shall be safe from the dangers and temptations of things seen and temporal. We should be gradually drawn from the love of money and of honours, and too great attention to business, drawn from these and led to Christ crucified, by Whom and through Whom alone, the holy Dead have fought the good fight, and are now passed further into the bosom of the Church, and the hopes of heaven. Thinking of the Dead will keep us from bad thoughts, from impure thoughts and unclean sins, which this age is full of and cares little about and treats as venial, though they are deadly sins. Who among us, if he

were left alone with a dead body, could feel the risings of lust or anger or pride ? Would not the calm, white, motionless face of the dead keep down the risings of sin ? Would it not have power to make us full of thoughts as quiet and solemn, as its own solemn self ? When any of us lose a father or mother, a brother or sister, or a dear friend, do we not for a long while after feel that sadness keeps us from sin ? We are not proud, we are not angry, we are not lustful when we are sad. Sorrow is better than laughter. Sorrow keeps us from sin. Immediately after the death of one we love, we feel, if we may say so reverently, as we feel after we have been at the Holy Communion : silent and thoughtful, quiet, gentle and full of good-will to everybody who comes near us, and inclined to prayer. The devil seems to depart from us for a season, and not to trouble us with temptation ; as knowing that we have been with Christ, and that now even our weak sinful bodies are too holy a place for him. Thinking of the Dead will make us kindhearted, meek, and forgiving. Rudeness, anger, spite, ridicule, noisiness, we have no room for all these when our hearts are

filled with thoughts of the quiet and peaceful Dead. We move softly about a room where a dead body lies; not as though our footsteps could awaken it or disturb it, but still it comes natural to us to move softly; it would seem rude to make a noise. It is the strong power the dead body has over us. So it is in our souls when we are thinking of the Dead.

Thinking of the Dead sets forth the power of the Cross of Christ, the power to heal, to save, to make the dead alive. What was there the Cross of Christ did not constrain their love to do? Did it not drive them from one end of this broad earth unto the other? Was not the Gospel heard, as the sound of good church bells, in every coast of the poor dark heathen, in our coast, the heathen English? In sun and frost, in wind and rain, in the scorning cities and colleges of the rich and wise, as well as in the rude huts and mud-built villages of the cruel savage, did they not bear the Cross, and lift it up on high, and plant it in the earth, and water it with prayer, and oft-time feed it with their blood? The Cross then is no word, no name, no sweet imagination. People do not die for names. The Cross was

unto the dead, the Cross is unto us, the power, the very mighty power of God. Deep wood, high hill, cold sea and sandy desert, all have seen and heard the Cross. The Dead took it there, the great, brave-hearted Dead. And then shall we forget them, as if they cared not how the Cross fared now on earth ? Christ is the head of all of us, the dead and living, the Holy Ghost knits dead and living into one fellowship and holy communion, He joins us to our Head by joints and bands, full of heavenly nourishment, poured in and out of each other, like veins in our bodies, which are a shadow of Christ's Body ; increase flows out from Christ into the dead and living ; we increase together, while we increase in Him. Let not one member say or think it can increase without another. Let not the living think that they can live and grow without the Dead ; the Dead in Christ ; nay, though they be absent in the flesh, yet are they with us in the Spirit, even the Holy Ghost, joying and beholding our order, and the steadfastness of our faith in Christ.

Thinking of the Dead brings other blessings yet. It leads us by God's grace to follow their examples. We see nothing but strife and

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FOR THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY.

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BY THE REV.

FREDERICK W. FABER, M.A.  
FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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I will glorify the house of My glory.—ISAIAH lx. 7.

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THE  
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WHEN a man is celebrating his birth-day, if he is a religious man, his thoughts run mainly in one direction, upon the trials and blessings he has already received from God, together with an anxious yet not uneasy or fretful looking on into futurity, which he is not able at such seasons altogether to repress. A man's past life does in a measure prophesy of his future life. He cannot indeed see his own immortal soul. He cannot tell where it resides, or how it is gifted, or what shall become of it in the end. He is to a very great degree a mystery to himself. But his own nature, his own powers, and the peculiar bent of his disposition, are disclosed to him in his sins. Where he has failed once, he may fail

again ; and where he has conquered once, he may, by God's grace, still go on to conquer. Thus his religious experience, and more especially his sins, are year by year getting together fresh materials, out of which he may in part discern his future life, his life, that is, as a religious man, as being a spirit in a state of growth and progress, as having a good beginning in himself, which will be carried on through good and evil, in light and darkness, without intermission, till the day of the Lord Jesus. Thus the anniversary of a man's birth, or still more of his Baptism, his true birth, is a time of thought and silence, of gladness yet full of fear, of rejoicing unto the Lord and yet rejoicing with reverence. Now what we thus naturally do for ourselves on our birthdays, we are called, on the Festival of the Epiphany, to do for the Church, making her past history prophesy of that which is yet to come. It is the birthday of the Gentile Church : the day at which a hundred prophecies touched and met and were fulfilled, and yet went on prophesying, as waiting for a more complete and glorious fulfilment. Thus both the past and the future are presented to our view ; and the

present is the ground from which we are to view them. The past filling us with thoughts of joy, not unmixed with sadder and more penitential feelings ; and the future being matter of faith, and hope, and prayer, and a loud call to a stricter and more obedient life. The Church, in the lessons which she has selected from Isaiah, puts before us the weight of prophecy which rests upon the Gentile Church ; and of which, lying as it does so plentifully up and down the Bible, these two chapters are, so to speak, rich specimens, like the grapes of Eshcol, proofs sent on beforehand, of plenty and abundance yet to be fulfilled. Something therefore may be said of these prophecies, as they concern the Church, and as we ourselves, being Churchmen, are practically concerned therein.

It must be obvious to any one reading the prophecies about the Gentile Church with common devoutness, and who has too much reverence and too much lowly-mindedness to put them aside after the summary fashion in which many do, on the score of allegory, eastern figures, or poetical expression, it must be obvious either that they are yet unfulfilled,

## 6      *The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church.*

except in part, or that the sins of the Church and the littleness of her faith have so interfered with and disfigured the fulfilment that we are not able to recognise it: not able, by comparing the present state of the Church with the lines and pictures of prophecy, to ascertain whereabouts the Church is, to what point she has arrived on that path of mingled suffering and glory which is allotted her in prophecy. Whichever view we take, it renders the past history of the Church Catholic, and her prospects for the future, a subject of lively and indeed of fearful interest. Looking at her present condition, either as regards the restoration of the Jews, or the conversion of the heathen, or the bringing to obedience the powers of the world, or as regards the purity of her ancient faith or the outward unity of her sons, it is such and so sad, that we should have imagined men would have been very jealous of accounting any prophecy quite and for ever fulfilled; that they would have been anxious to think that as much as possible yet remained to be fulfilled; because then there would be so much the more glory yet behind, which might fall out even in the days of their flesh;

by which, at all events, whether among those who are alive on earth or those who are alive elsewhere, they would be very greatly and very sensibly affected. Now the case is so far otherwise, that men do every thing they can to make themselves believe that almost all is accomplished, and nothing to come except those great things which will be the immediate precursors of the second advent of our Lord.

Thus men have, for the most part, treated prophecy in one or other of two ways. Some have been offended at the wild and heretical speculations which have too much characterized later writers on unfulfilled prophecy ; and so have been led to regard that whole province of theology as dangerous and unpractical. They have thus, in great measure, failed to keep alive within themselves that affectionate solicitude and eagerness about the Church and her prospects which were so strikingly uppermost in the mind of the ancient Christians, and contributed in no slight degree to their elevation and heavenliness of character. By this too they have weakened that temper of readiness and expectation, which the perpetual belief and waiting for the speedy coming of

## 8     *The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church.*

the Lord could not but form within the soul : a belief which, however lightly spoken of in these times, was as prominent in apostolic teaching as it was influential in apostolic practice. They have come imperceptibly to substitute death in their minds for this more kindling hope, and to urge it on their followers where St. Peter or St. Paul would have urged the immediate advent of our Lord. Death indeed, in their view, was as it were practically and to each of them the second advent. For they had built a wilful wall between the dead, the world of spirits, and themselves ; and, their allegiance to the Church having long sat loosely upon them, they had become absorbed in themselves, and had lost all keen and anxious sympathy with the Church at large, or pious expectation of those glories, which, for so many centuries, have been delayed. Thus prophecy was degraded to a mere evidence, to be coldly weighed and accurately fitted to actual facts, and to be commented upon with much applause out of infidel historians ; and texts were picked up here and there out of the Bible to be clothed with effective parallels and striking fulfilments, which

should carry conviction to the doubtful, and transmute, by a poor intellectual process, unbelievers into Christians.

Then again there were others, of quicker devotional feelings, who threw themselves into the field of unfulfilled prophecy, and, not carrying along with them the guidance of the early Church, ran into wanton speculations, not always agreeable to the analogy of faith. Their tendency has generally been to find the great bulk of prophecy accomplished and accomplishing in their own times. Thus the Roman Church, the English Church, the infidel schools of the eighteenth century, and finally Napoleon, have been brought into uncouth collision as the respective antichrists, each of a numerous and influential body of expositors. In like manner, the apostacy predicted by St. Paul long remained in the quiet possession of Protestant controversialists, as an undoubted weapon against Rome ; but it has been in this day transferred, in the miserable dialect of a late confused and impure writer, to the “ Nicene asceticism,” and “ religion of the Sacraments” of “ancient christianity.” To serve their successive purposes, the literal and alle-

## 10 *The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church.*

gorical interpretation of prophecy have been run together in the most uncritical confusion. It has not uncommonly happened, that half a passage of Scripture has been, by one school, taken literally and the other half figuratively; which literal and figurative halves have simply changed places one with another in the succeeding school of exposition. This anxiety to find a great body of predictions meeting and fulfilling themselves in their own days, has not arisen from any sympathy or strong feeling with the fortunes of the Church Catholic, but rather from the necessity of some high imaginative excitement for themselves and their adherents, or to escape by means of their theology from the dulness of their own uneventful times, or not unfrequently for the base end of serving some coarse controversial purpose.

It is unnecessary to show what discredit all this profane handling of Holy Scripture has brought upon the study of unfulfilled prophecy, in the minds of too many sober and modest Christians. All history, its little and least events, as well as its greater ones, are doubtless fulfilments of prophecy, and advances to

that complete fulfilment which is the glory of the Church ; and the only deep Christian way of studying history is as the reflected face of prophecy. And so far the schemes of interpretation above alluded to are not without a portion of truth in them : each may have some little. But what is to be observed as the characteristic mark of both these schools is this, that the Church is dropped out of view : they seem to have forgotten almost throughout that the Church and the Church only, one and catholic, is the object of nearly all this prophecy ; the person, as it were, round which prophecy revolves, the form which prophecy clothes, and from which it takes its shape ; that these several predictions are, so to speak, the Church's garments, garments smelling of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces whereby her Spouse hath made her glad.

It troubles worldly men and frightens faithless men to think that they are living in a state of miracles, that a miraculous dispensation is going on all round them, and that disclosures and appearances of it may be expected at any moment. It disturbs their peace and

comfort to imagine that they are so near such great things, from the presence and, it may so happen, from the sight of which they cannot escape. They are like the Gadarenes, whose hearts failed them when they besought Jesus that He would depart out of their coasts. They have not the cause of the Church at heart ; except where it does not interfere with themselves, where it does not call on them to labour and suffer hardness, to make sacrifices, and go heavily as one that mourneth for his mother. They are not anxious to see all nations and kingdoms, who will not serve the Church, perish, because they know the victory involves trouble and unquietness in which they themselves will be concerned ; and so they “see that rest is good, and the land that it is pleasant ; and bow their shoulders to bear, and become servants unto tribute<sup>1</sup>. ” They do not see any miracles ; and it is not likely they will believe what they do not see, when they are so anxious to disbelieve ; and thus, however unconsciously to themselves, they use the very language of unbelief ; “since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xlix. 15.

from the beginning<sup>1.</sup>" But St. Peter warns us distinctly that the "Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness<sup>2.</sup>" We know then that He has made the Church great promises of glory; we see that those promises are not yet fulfilled, and so we believe they will be fulfilled very soon; because St. Peter tells us "the Lord is not slack concerning His promise." But worldly men have not set their hearts upon this glory. They are not earnest about it. They do not feel at all unhappy about the Church. They have forgotten Jerusalem in their mirth. They have not remembered her captivity. They are afraid of the trouble and noise which may accompany the bringing in of this glory: and so they do not like to be told that they are living under a dispensation of miracles.

But is not this the only true and reasonable account of the state of things under which we find ourselves as Churchmen? The time of miracles is said to have ended, that is to say, of visible miracles. But there may be invisible miracles, and visible miracles may return any day. The Conception of our Lord was a

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 9.

## 14 *The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church.*

miracle ; and a miracle without a witness. The Resurrection was a miracle ; yet no one saw it, except perhaps the Angels, as it is written, “ He was seen of Angels<sup>1</sup>. ” His chosen Apostles did not see it. They were only witnesses of it, by having seen Him after He was risen. No one saw Him rise. The time of visible miracles then is over ; it is suspended for a while, but not for ever. It seems from Scripture, that the end of the Church will come to pass among far greater and more universal and more terrible wonders than those which stood round about her cradle. But are there to be no miracles meanwhile ; that is to say, if the prophecies are ever to find their fulfilment ? Will not the restoration of the Jews be a miracle ? Will not the conversion of the Gentiles be a miracle ? Will not the breaking in pieces of the images of the powers of this world be a miracle ? The extinction of heresy, the recovery of unity—will not these be miracles ? And some of these things at all events will come to pass, unless God is utterly displeased with His Church. Yet He has told us this very day

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim iii. 16.

that He cannot forget her : “ Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands ; thy walls are continually before me. As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with all the nations, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth<sup>1</sup>. ”

Of course one effect of our sins is this, that we do not know what hold they have taken on the accomplishment of prophecy, what they have interfered with and what they have not ; what will be kept back from us because of our sins, and what will still be given us in spite of them. For example : whether God will ever give His Church unity and outward communion again, in which her strength and dignity so much consist, and upon which so many of the promises evidently depend, seeing that man’s sin and wantonness made light of breaking the body of Christ while it was yet entire ; and that since then, when from time to time in particular Churches God has restored partial unity, as it were, to try man’s heart and see what was in it, man’s sin destroyed it all again. It ruffled the waters, and the image of heaven that was reflected there passed away.

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xlix. 16.

## 16 *The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church.*

We are left in doubt. Doubt is the necessary consequence of sin. But, blessed be God! whatever is matter of doubt is matter of faith and prayer also. Complete unity then may never be given us again; but so far as the restoration of the Jews and their reconciliation with the Gentile Church, there seems ground for supposing that it will be granted to us.

Now let us look at the restoration of the Jews, as giving interest to the future prospects of the Church, the thought of which the Festival of the Epiphany almost forces upon us. The Gentile Church, it is true, has a glory of her own, quite independent of the Jews. “Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength<sup>1</sup>. ” Yet how much more glorious if Israel be gathered. Indeed the gathering of Israel seems to be, from many places of Scripture, the office of the Gentile Church; and the verse above quoted may be rendered, though not so well, as we read it in the margin: “The Lord formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, that Israel may be

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xlix. 5.

gathered, and I may be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God may be my strength." This gives still further interest to the Church, as having not only the conversion of the heathen entrusted to her, but in an especial manner the restoration of the Jews. And "if the casting away of them was the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead<sup>1</sup>?" There is yet a more solemn thought connected with this subject. The Jewish Church of old imagined themselves as secure in the favour of God as we the Gentile and the Christian Church think ourselves now. They were cut off. Obedience was the condition on which their existence as a Church depended, and obedience is the condition on which our existence as a particular Church depends also. "Boast not against the branches. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well: because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear. God is able to graft them in again. Blindness in part is happened unto Israel, *only* until the fulness of

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xi. 15.

## 18 *The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church.*

the Gentiles be come in. All Israel shall be saved<sup>1</sup>." Thus, so far as the restoration of Israel is concerned, which is only one of many promised glories, there is enough to quicken our hopes and feelings about the prospects of the Church, and make us look on with eagerness to the time when it shall please God to put such great faith into the hearts of the Gentiles, that they may bring Jacob back again. The Jews have all along been a miraculous people: God hath not dealt so with any nation. They were miraculously distinguished from the rest of the world by God's favour; and they are no less miraculously distinguished now by His displeasure. Their present condition is a living proof of the fulfilment of prophecy, of which our very bodily senses can assure us. Now, with whatever other circumstances of pomp and grandeur the restoration of Israel may be accompanied, the mere ending of their present state would be an open miracle; a visible putting forth of God's Hand on behalf of His Church; a bringing about a wonderful change on the outward face of things. When it took place we could

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xi. 18.

not but see, our enemies could not but see, that God was with us of a truth.

The restoration of the Jews leads us entirely into the future—the prospects of the Church. Let us look at one more prophecy, which leads us into the past as well as the future : the one contained in Isaiah lx. 12 : “The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish.” This is a promise made by God to the Church, that all heathen kingdoms should be brought into subjection to her. It is made in a still more special manner by the prophet Zechariah<sup>1</sup>, where it is said, that whatever nation refuses to come up to Jerusalem to keep a Feast of Tabernacles to the Lord, shall have no rain ; and of Egypt, where from natural causes there is seldom rain, and the inundation of the Nile serves instead, it is said that there shall be the plague. The Church of God was then with the Jews, and the promise made to them. When, however, through unbelief the Church passed from them to the Gentiles, all the promises were transferred with her as her own inheritance, as our Lord teaches ; and this one in particular is renewed and repeated by Him,

<sup>1</sup> Zech. xiv. 17, 18.

## 20 *The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church.*

lest it should have been thought something peculiar to the Jews. “Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken ; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder<sup>1</sup>. ” Where we may observe, that by the word *stone* we are at once recalled to the prophecy of Daniel<sup>2</sup>, where the Messiah’s kingdom is also represented under the similitude of a stone, as well as to the passage in the Psalms quoted by our Lord in the same chapter<sup>3</sup>. Now surely, no one can say that this prophecy is yet fulfilled. Let us look into the history of the past—there it has been partially fulfilled more than once. I will take one instance familiar to almost every body : the mortal struggle of the early Church with the Roman empire, according to Daniel’s interpretation of the dream. The infant Church grew up, in spite of persecution, in the very middle of the empire, gradually, slowly, silently, as our Lord said it would, like a grain of mustard seed. It grew more hardily for being in the shade.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxi. 43, 44.   <sup>2</sup> Dan. ii. 34.   <sup>3</sup> Ps. cxviii. 22.

In time it had eaten away the heart of the old Roman empire, which at last thought fit to adopt Christianity as its state religion. But it was too late. Repentance had been deferred too long. It was like putting new wine into an old bottle. The full and quick spirit that was in it tore its way through the old vessels that would fain have held it in. But they were of man's making, and therefore could not do so. The Church was the destruction of the empire. She killed it at its heart. She was a jealous power, and would not infuse fresh life and vigour into an outworn system which she had not herself created: so she broke it. Now in this she asserted her birth-right over earthly powers, and the prophecy was in a measure fulfilled. Yet surely not completely fulfilled. It was but one instance. If it fulfilled the particular prophecy of Daniel, yet it does not come up to the fulness of the general prophecy in the text: and if we look attentively into the prophecy in Daniel, we shall find that even that does not seem quite fulfilled. The iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, are indeed broken to pieces together; yet are they become like the

## 22    *The Unfulfilled Glory of the Church.*

chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and has the wind carried them away *so that no place is found for them*<sup>1</sup>? It does not seem that this is fulfilled.

Now I have selected these two instances, the restoration of the Jews, and the breaking in pieces the powers of the world, for this reason; that it is a great comfort to us, and a great incentive to labour, to know how much is yet behind of the Church's glory; and these two promises in particular, can scarcely be brought about without making much noise, and disorder, and fear, in their fulfilment. No vague notions of a spiritual fulfilment, spiritual, that is, in the sense of hidden and unseen, can satisfy the plain words of Inspiration, on these two points at all events. God will be visibly with His Church, she will be exalted visibly in the eyes of men, she that is great among the nations, and princess among the princes, will visibly cease to be tributary<sup>2</sup>; the solitary city will visibly be full of people<sup>3</sup>; they that despised her shall bow themselves down at the soles of her feet, and men shall speak out loud and call her, the City of the Lord, the

<sup>1</sup> Dan. ii. 35.      <sup>2</sup> Lam. i. 1.      <sup>3</sup> Is. lx. 14.

Zion of the holy One of Israel; the singers shall sing aloud, so that the joy of Jerusalem will be heard even afar off<sup>1</sup>!

Now this fact, that we are living under a state of miracles, and that most of the miraculous glory of the Church is yet unfulfilled, teaches us one lesson: and the likelihood that man's sin may in some way or other have hindered, and may yet still further hinder the coming of that glory, teaches us another. From the first we learn to be *cheerful about the Church*; and from the second, to be *watchful of ourselves*. We are not to despond. We are not to give ourselves up to mere feeling, and waste our soul's best health and strength in holding mere opinions, and giving way to the indulgence of vain excitement and useless regret. We are not to be weary at fast and feast, in sacraments and prayer. Our faith must grow with our difficulties. We must hope even against hope, courageously and like men. There is much glory to be wrought out yet for and within the Church. Many persons are inclined to disbelieve this; because it seems so unlikely from the state of the world. To

<sup>1</sup> Neh. xii. 43.

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them it is an oppressive and melancholy thing, that all nations, one after another, should have fallen to decay ; that man's intellect should nowhere have reared an enduring structure ; that civilization should have moved from east to west, and no trace be left of her presence, except perhaps here and there a half-ruined temple leaning on the mound its own decay has heaped about it. Still more melancholy that it should have been so with the Church in those countries. This fact in her history is a scandal to them ; just as our Saviour's life was a scandal to the Jews. They did not think there was enough of glory in it. They did not know His glory was in suffering. And the Church's glory is in suffering also. Her career was not to be always one of victory and triumph, as we may see from that vision of St. John in Patmos, when he saw the holy Church pass on from east to west, like the moon, which is her figure and her type, walking among the manifold shadows of the night. Surely they do not remember that the kingdoms and empires of the world with all their systems and governments, that all the intricate and tyrannical state in which we live, is unreal ; that it

is merely the divinely ordered apparatus of probation, surrounded by which, single and immortal souls are to move, and be disciplined for heaven. The fall of an old empire, which at far distant intervals sounds an alarm throughout the world, possesses no interest for the Church, except so far as it may aid her in decyphering the handwriting of prophecy, graven on the walls of the visible world, and furnish another type, perchance a presage, of the final destiny of man.

But, if the world's history weighs oppressively on mere literary historians and worldly-minded men, there are others, to whom the Church's history brings only despondency and cheerlessness. There is indeed much in it to make us humble ourselves deeply for our sins; yet it is not so dark and so disheartening as some make it out to be; neither may we, as reverent and earnest men, betake ourselves to any of the rude and faithless theories men have dreamed, in order to get rid of our difficulty. Some have so little had the glory of the Church at heart, that they have depressed the primitive Christians to our own level, as well in the gifts, as in the graces of the Spirit: and, for

want of being scribes well instructed unto the Kingdom of heaven, have fearfully misinterpreted the history of that Kingdom all along. They deny that Scripture promises any powers to the early Church which are not equally promised to the Church through all time. Surely men forget that many passages of holy Scripture imply that these powers are to depend greatly upon agreement and unity<sup>1</sup>; which unity the ancient Church had, and we have not. Again, the Epistles mention spiritual gifts as being very plentiful in the Churches, especially in Corinth, the most disordered of all the apostolic communities; and the continuance of these miraculous gifts may be traced for some while in well attested histories, till the Church and the world are too much together, and many lights go out or burn dim within the sanctuary. These gifts are not

<sup>1</sup> For example, St. John xvii. 20, 21, 22, 23; where our Lord first makes what he is about to say belong to the Church of all ages, as well as the Apostles; and then makes the power of the Church to convert the world—her glory—her perfection—to consist in her having a unity, mysteriously like the circuminsession of the Father and the Son.

visibly continued to our times, and so far as we can make out, do not show themselves actively working in the separated particular Churches into which the Catholic body has been so wretchedly sundered. Still there are great promises of mighty gifts made in the Gospels to the Church, and those promises stand to these days unrevoked. It may be partly, as these men say, that we have the same gifts with the Church of old. Surely, in the Church Catholic there doth still abide this miraculous life, and power, and energy, latent because of separation, enfeebled because of sin, in abeyance because of want of faith. Are we then to render the recovery of the Church's vigour still more improbable, by holding off from and multiplying causes of jealousy with other communities ? Are we to separate ourselves more and more from the ancient Church in doctrine, in morals, and in tone of thought and feeling, and make it too a foreign Church, as these men would have us do ? Should we, as they do, in profane pride, too much forget our own sins and self-indulgences, our ungodly literatures and fearful separations, and rife heresies, and lightly regarded schisms, and

rude handlings of Scripture, and endeavour to render the ancient Church contemptible and hateful in men's eyes, throwing upon it all that is evil in our present state, and arrogating to ourselves all the light that is still left within us ? Surely, were that true, our light would be a very Egyptian darkness. It may be well for us, politically speaking, to be an island : but woe be unto us if we be insulated from the continent either of ancient or later Christianity. Again, there are some few who would have their theology thought enlarged and philosophical, when they maintain that Christianity, like science, or literature, or civilization, has been continually improving ; which, to be consistent, must mean either that the world of this day is getting beyond the Bible, (which is not at all unlikely,) or that it now understands the Bible better than the disciples, friends, or episcopal successors of the Apostles did (which is most unlikely) : or, as this view is modestly worded by one writer<sup>1</sup>, that “ po-

<sup>1</sup> The author of some tracts called *Ancient Christianity*. His view, so far as we can gather it, from the confused arrangement and ambiguous oracular style of his book, may be stated thus :—That Christianity was never less Christ-

pery is a corrected expression of the Christianity of the Nicene age."

It is unnecessary here to enter into a refutation of this view, which makes the Church depend upon the world, instead of the world depending upon the Church. To reply to a line of argument, which at every turn contradicts the Articles, the Homilies, and the Prefaces to the Book of Common Prayer, would almost seem a patronizing of the Church rather than receiving instruction from her. We are only speaking here to humble Churchmen, who may have been disappointed and discomfited by the study of Church history. Humble

ian than when it was ancient (p. 99); that Nicene Christianity was the apostasy predicted by St. Paul (p. 299); that Romanism is an improvement upon it, and has done the best it could with it (pp. 78, 79); that, however, the Church did not cast off the slough of Gnosticism and apostasy till the Reformation (*passim*); that up to that time oriental Christianity was mainly Sooffeism and occidental Christianity mainly Brahminism (p. 147, et al.); that the Reformers themselves were too much addicted to "*demonology*"; that the English Church is "*untowardly*" Nicene in her formularies; finally, that we must emancipate ourselves forthwith, the means of doing which the author has not yet published.

minds need no caution against such a view of things. It may be let alone, and left to its fate, with that constant esteem for antiquity and steady reference to the primitive centuries, which has been so long and so deeply worn by political trial and distressing controversy into the very heart of the English branch of the Church Catholic. Let as many, then, as feel a deep and anxious interest in those glories of prophecy, which are yet to be fulfilled, labour rather to bring them on, by uniting themselves more and more closely with the ancient Church. Let them be ancient Christians in doctrine, in customs, but, above all, in habits of thought. Let us fix our gaze with such affectionate steadiness upon the austere beauty of their features, that their expression may imprint itself on us, their lineaments transfer themselves upon ours, their eyes be kindled again in our eyes, their voices wake and speak in ours.

For ourselves and our own practice, however, we must remember that God withdraws Himself, and removes the candlestick where there is unfaithfulness. The life of the Church is in the faith of her children, her

strength is in their purity, and her hope in their obedience. We must not attempt great things. We must neither dream nor do for ourselves, in thought or deed, it were better not even in our secret imaginations, what we ought rather to leave for God to do for us. We must not talk too much of the evils of the Church, lest perchance we cease to feel for them. We must remember, that from mere mortals we have been by baptism marvellously made into sons of God: and we must live as beseems our heavenly nobility. By discipline and hardness, by constancy and self-denial, by meekness and gentleness, by doing our plain duty just as it comes before us, by prayer and watching, and above all by frequent sacraments, we shall build up the waste places of Jerusalem. The whole Church is bettered by each single man's obedience. This is beyond a doubt. Only we must not look to see our own work. Great works are slow, and the foundation stones of God's works are laid in depth and silence: the feast of the Epiphany teaches us this. The proud Romans and the other nations of the world little thought, when the wise men were at the Lord's feet at

Bethlehem, that homage had been paid in their name to a King they did not know, and when they knew Him, despised Him, and made light of His Cross. The first-fruits of the Gentile Church, which we commemorate on the Epiphany, were offered in secrecy and silence. So every little thing we do, every hearty sacrifice for the sake of the Church, no matter how humble, may be a beginning of the fulfilment of some glorious prophecy. Never forget that we are living among miracles. We may not reap the fruits of our labours, any more than we shall enjoy the shade of the forest-trees we plant for our posterity. Our fathers laboured for us in many ways ; for instance, in settling the canon of Scripture, and in determining the true faith respecting the most Holy Trinity, and the two Natures in Christ. So they laboured for us ; and so we have entered into their labours. We may be called to different sorts of labour ; as for example, to the vindication of the Old Testament from profane criticisms, or to the recovery of ritual communion in the Church Catholic ; but whatever it be, if we are holy in it, and self-denying in it, it will endure, and those

that come after us will enter into it. Let not this be a discouragement to us; else we may have reason to fear that we are labouring not for Christ's sake, but for our own: not for the Church, but for our own reward, our own reputation, our own greatness; forgetting that love has no reward, but in the happiness of its beloved. If we love the Church, we shall keep the least of her commandments; and by keeping her commandments bring about her glory. We may die before all these things come to pass. But we are not separated from the Church by death. We shall only enter deeper into it. The souls beneath the altar are as earnest for the future as we can be. The spirits are still alive, still alive in the Church, still feeling with the Church, still waiting for her glory. Thus then we must live and work steadily and quietly, just as if nothing was wrong, as if every thing about us was as it ought to be; for in that is the only hope that it ever will become so. We must never suffer ourselves to be unsettled by appearances of evil, or to be ruffled by the power and tyranny of wickedness. We must not always be gazing up into heaven, lest perchance we stumble upon earth; or be

looking out fretfully and feverishly for the changeable and unsafe symptoms of the times. Faith is deep, and keeps her own secrets, and is difficult to disturb. “ He that observeth the wind shall not sow ; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child ; even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand : for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good<sup>1</sup>. ”

<sup>1</sup> Eccl. xi. 4.

THE END.

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A

# CHURCHMAN'S POLITICS

IN

## DISTURBED TIMES:

A SERMON.

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BY THE REV.

FREDERICK W. FABER, M.A.

FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times.

ISAIAH xxxiii 6.

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A

## CHURCHMAN'S POLITICS IN DISTURBED TIMES.

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EVERY nation under the sun contains within itself two societies, and two only—the world, as Holy Scripture calls it, and the Church: and two faiths, and two only—the faith of Baal, and the faith of Christ. It is difficult to bring this home to ourselves in these times; and yet, in the bringing it home to ourselves in little things, almost the whole of practical religion consists. It is difficult, educated as most of us have been, to discover these two societies; to trace the faint outlines which bound them; to feel with keen sense of touch the invisible fences which divide the one off

from the other ; to detect the points where the one finally melts away and fades into the other ; or to estimate the disorder and misrule which have arisen from the ties and mutual subjections of these societies to each other, in things where such ties and subjections ought not to be. The worshippers of Baal and of Christ are in one throng, travelling along the same road, and too much minding the same things. The world and the Church are entangled together ; and religious living, difficult at all seasons, is now ten times more difficult from the entanglement. One advantage, however, springs out of this otherwise unhappy state of things. They, who are really and honestly striving after heaven, are forced to carry out their religion into things, and seasons, and places, where otherwise perhaps it would not have come. It strikes at the root of the notion that religion is a separate thing of itself, instead of being, as it is, simply the attitude into which a good man throws himself to do every thing, the natural shape which all his actions take, as naturally as the cloud takes shapes from the wind, which is a type of the Spirit. Thus the very confused state

of the world brings it about that in these days a man's politics and literature are not, if he be a thinking man, mere views or theories, constructed without fear or responsibility, and upon the shortest notice, views or theories, which he can hold or not hold, and yet be all the while as good or as bad a man as ever. They are parts of his practical religion : if he moves, they move ; if they move, he moves ; the whole man moves together. There are still men left here and there, in some places, whose politics and literature, are views, theories, and mere intellectual systems. But the time is most happily gone by when such men can be influential. The state of things, whether out in the open and active world, or among the retired and deeply practical thinkers of mankind, has got beyond them. They are left upon the shore, and the stream can return no more to such unrealities yet awhile. Disease has spread too widely among us, and is already too near the very fountains of our health and stability, for our imaginations to be successfully acted on by the coloured remedies of such men as these.

Neither on the other hand—and this too

we owe to our present difficulties—can good and earnest men betake themselves, each in his little way and proper place, to the work of healing, by endeavouring to bring back the colour and the blood into systems or states of things, which, though beautiful in death, or skilfully embalmed, have yet been long since borne out to burial. They may borrow from chivalry, or the romantic days of English honour and loyalty, their stern enthusiasm, deep stedfastness, and calmest fidelity ; these may serve them well for their present toil ; but their way of working and the things for which they work, cannot and must not be the same. In a word, neither the churches nor the empires of the middle ages are to be rebuilt, however lovely many things about them were, nor the forms of that warlike Christianity to be wished back again in place of the better forms of a more primitive pattern. They were forms which primitive truths put on, and in which they then saved the world : forms which were real for awhile. And the present state of things must surely teach the ardent and the hopeful disciples of old times, that it is the primitive truths for which they have to strive,

and not to do battle for the chivalrous, middle-age accessories of them, however gorgeous or picturesque.

Now of course it is a great thing in a country which, for whatever reason, is supposed to be free—that is, to be slave to none but its own passion, selfishness, or strange proneness to self-praise—that politics should be a matter of practical religion. It is a great thing among a people whose constitution is such as to allow, for the sake of other advantages, of excitement, party fierceness, perilous freedom of tongue, and divers malignant and unchristian feelings, that all, but especially the poor and unlearned, should have something above and beyond their opinions to guide, to inform, and to steady them, in the exercise of their political duties.

Let us dwell then on this matter more at length. We must have long seen the growing bewilderment of all simple men, in the attempt to arrange, if we may thus speak, their Christianity so as to meet the continual cases of conscience, arising out of the now manifold duties belonging to that station of life in which it has pleased God's Providence to place them :

duties to the world and to the Church, which are now beginning even in common life to interfere with and intersect one another. In political questions it cannot have escaped us at this day, in the midst of political disturbances, not arising here and there only from present pressure of hardship, but striking root all over, and winning to themselves a kind of unity, through theories and principles utterly opposed to the Bible,—when we are made to feel that there is some meaning in our prayer, “from all sedition, privy conspiracy and rebellion, good Lord deliver us”—it cannot have escaped us how necessary it is for all of us, poor and rich, ignorant and learned, and the poor rather than the rich, the ignorant rather than the learned, to set clearly before ourselves the few plain rules of Holy Scripture about political rights and duties. Neither let any one say this is not a meet subject to be spoken of in church. It is the meetest of all subjects to be spoken of in church now—for it is great part of our practical religion, and in England it is so seldom that it is spoken of with quietness, that it is well it should be spoken of in church, where God is, and, as before Him,

with gentleness and awe, not with insignificant boastings about rights, not with childish vauntings about English greatness, but with deep, severe, broken-hearted self-abasement.

We are living in a proud and very exclusively intellectual age. We make knowledge and intellect the test and standard of all excellence. We are so much accustomed to it, that we propose no better remedy for the sufferings and troubles of the poor but more knowledge, more intelligence, more secular education ; and the rich do not mean to mock the poor when they propose it, and the poor have not discovered yet that it is after all a mockery ; a cruel falsehood at which they will one day be fearfully indignant, indignant even to sin and tumult. Let us begin, however, by bearing this in mind, that Scripture no where recognizes any rights as belonging to any man, except those which we have in right of our baptism, which made us members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. It is well to recollect this. Scripture says no where that any man has any right to anything but his life. This does away with many difficulties : for example, we know

that many of the early Christians were slaves, even under Christian emperors, up to Justinian's day, and yet, that in the long run, Christianity went far to abolish slavery. Now Scripture condemns man-stealing, but it is so far from recognizing any right of slaves to be free, that it gives them rules for their behaviour, and enjoins obedience to the unthankful and cruel, giving sanctity to that obedience by coupling it with the obedience of the Incarnate Son Himself. Christianity does many things for men in the long run which it would be actual sin for them to attempt or dream of for themselves. In whatever rank or state of life Christ calls us, in that it tells us to abide. It seems to fear change, and nothing but change. "As the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk; and so ordain I in all Churches<sup>1</sup>." The Gospel indeed is mighty to the pulling down of strong holds; but it does so either by God's arm or through men's sins: on its disciples it enjoins quietness and obedience. The obedience of saints never pulls down strong holds visibly

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 17.

or with noise. Scripture makes no exception to their obedience. It contemplates hard cases of bad kings or graceless masters, and straightway enjoins the same conscientious submission to them also, where prior duty to God is not concerned. It no where recognizes any right to disobey—any right, in the most profane language of some, to rise in insurrection. Men have no rights as men, so far as the Bible confers them: what rights they have they have as Christians, and those are not of any of the four earthly kingdoms, but of that new monarchy which Daniel saw of old<sup>1</sup>, for whose perfect establishing we have so long been impatiently waiting, and whose foundation-stones are even now settling down on earth from heaven. The world builds up earthly strongholds, world-wisdoms, literatures, governments: Christianity pulls them down again. It treads every thing under foot as it goes. It has done so all along. We think much of wise men, learned men, clever men: nay, we make gods of them, and images of their wisdom. Scripture on the other hand

<sup>1</sup> Dan. vii.

never mentions them except as likely to oppose the Gospel; and then it speaks of them in quiet words of slight and scorn. It recognizes all sorts of distinctions, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, of wealth and blood, and the like. It no where recognizes any distinction between clever men and men less gifted. It gives many and minute rules for the guidance of our bodies and souls, our passions and appetites, and affections. It gives none for the guidance of our intellect. It speaks of many sorts of talents, wealth, time, and knowledge of the truth: it no where specifies that to which we have almost exclusively assigned the name of *talent*. It is quite mysteriously silent about intellectual gifts, and the strange gulfs they make between man and man, country and country, nay, even between church and church. It seldom alludes to wisdom, except to tell us that the foolishness of God is wiser than it: nay, it scarcely seems in any place to allude to the existence of intellect at all, as a distinct part of our being. Surely, there is deep meaning in this silence, a silence almost inexplicable to our modern habits of thought.

Now let us bear these things in mind : and more than this. Most of us, in times of national rejoicing or other public excitements, have doubtless formed part of the great crowds usual on such occasions. We may have seen the way in which others have been affected by them, and experienced their wonderful influence upon ourselves ; how they transport people beyond themselves, make them insensible to time, to pain, to weariness, to inconvenience of many sorts. It is a kind of drunkenness. The senses report to us untruly of what is done before our eyes or said within our hearing. Without any attempt to deceive or even any conscious exaggeration, it is almost impossible from any number of witnesses to ascertain correctly what has been done or said in a crowd. Thought has been almost extinguished. The crowd has acted as one man, a man beside himself, swayed and set in wild motion by evil impulses not from himself, and beyond his control. Now let us bear in mind that these large masses and multitudes of men—which are like persons possessed, and whose limbs move one way when they would have them move another—are made up of single, solitary souls : each to

be saved separately and by itself; each to be condemned separately and by itself; each with its own particular weight of sin, its own repentances, its own opportunities of grace, its own circle of sorrows, cares, fears, joys, affections, its own Christian distinctness ; each having to stand by itself at the judgment-seat of Christ, lonely, unexcited, uncheered by shouts, unsheltered by a crowd ; as answerable for all the sins committed when it ran with a multitude to do evil, as a drunken man is answerable for murder. This is the Christian view of large meetings of men. Let us think of this and beware.

We are thrown upon unsteady times, times made unsteady by feverish choosing, and trying and rejecting all manner of experiments after stability, full of blind movement, of change, of uncertainty, of discontentment. Yet, if we may say so reverently in His house to whom the future belongeth, full, yea pregnant with great hopes to be won through great strifes. Rich and poor, high and low, learned and ignorant, are all unsettled. They do not join well together. They fancy there is some difference or other between them about which they must quarrel. They do not

feel, as to be safe they must feel, one bond of union, one tie of brotherly kindness remaining amongst them, keeping them united and making them happy. Pride of wealth is greater than pride of blood, and less to be endured: and pride of knowledge throws a still more heartless barrier between itself and the hewers of wood and drawers of water, who are yet members of Christ, and are spirits precious to Him Who made them. Amongst the poor there is a base pride that feels almost offence against such as give them alms, and an envy of those who, scarcely above them in political rights, are unequally removed in wealth and outward happiness: and withal a yearning for community of heart and kindliness of demeanour, which the cold, stiff, systematic arrangements of modern charity are little likely to supply. On the other hand, among the rich there surely is a very wrong lightness of speech, a light manner of behaving, a careless and rude neglect of form, an indifferent and slighting treatment of inferiors in little things, which can spring only from a miserable coldness or a wicked levity of heart, and which, if traditions are true, was not the old English character. Now, what is the

remedy for all this ? It is not to be found in political wisdom, in political rights, in political tumult, in noise, and disturbance, and great sin. This cannot better our condition ; this cannot increase our happiness ; this cannot be the stability of our times. It is not to be found in wealth, in prosperity, in great advancements, in comforts, in luxuries, in the greatness of our nation. This cannot be the stability of our times.

The remedy can alone be found in some strong chain, not of earthly forging, which shall bind the rich and poor, the noble and the cottager, the scholar and the simple one, into one whole firm body, each leaning on each, each supporting each, each loving each ; and that bond neither is nor can be other than “the one Body, and the one Spirit, the one hope, one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all<sup>1</sup>. ” It is only in the Church of God on earth that a people can be at one together, as in a city that is at unity with itself. Thus, then, men who deeply and sincerely labour for the good of their country,

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6.

and for the happiness of the poor, must strive mainly after one thing—to make the Church of Christ felt every where throughout the land, to bring it home to all, to dig deep among the people, and lay the foundations of it there. The Church is not to be reduced, as some would fain make out, to a cold, inactive abstraction, to a generally diffused system of religion, to a school of theology, to a purifying literature. It is an active, living, positive institution, with external ordinances and authoritative ritual, and a succession of teachers, and proper mysteries of its own. It is visible, and visibly represents the Saviour. It is a person, and has offices like a person, the same offices its Master had on earth—to teach, to feed, to judge, to punish, to heal, to save : and all these it has, because it is not by itself, but is His body, Who is both God and Man. So long as the world lasts, there must be rich and poor ; so long as the moon endureth, there must be high and low. These are God's ways, His rules and orders, and mysterious ministry of the world. But, if these earthly ranks and distinctions seem a bar to our all feeling together, and for each other, then in the Church of Christ, and within hearing of the everlasting

Gospel, there are no differences, no bars, no hindrances to love. All are Christ's, because Christ died for all. All have a high and most surpassing dignity as sons of God, and heirs of heaven. All have a wonderful secret life hidden with Christ in God. There are the same rich sacraments for all.

Thus, then, while we feel that we are truly living in most worldly and unsteady times, we have a holy place where we may take sweet refuge from our own unsteadiness ; a place of prayer, and praise, and sacraments, and Gospel sounds. The world, indeed, is waxing stronger every day. Its pride rises with its riches ; and with its pride, its lust, and wantonness, and tyranny. But, though the whole wide earth, and its thick, populous multitudes, bore down ever so furiously, they cannot snap one of the slightest links of that holy chain which binds all Christian hearts together. Hearts so bound are safe. Hearts not so bound are already well nigh lost and perished. The nation not so bound together hath almost ceased to be a nation now.

Fifty years ago, the great mass of people in country towns and villages were but very little and indirectly influenced by the government of

the country. Men came into power, and went out of it, whose names they scarcely knew, or had no interest in. Government, politics, and the like, were things far off from them : words they had little knowledge of. Great changes took place, which changed not the condition of the poor ; great improvements were made, which were no improvements to the poor ; great glory was gained, which shed no sunshine round the poor man's hearth ; great happiness was earned, which made the poor no happier. In one respect, then, they were blessed in this their quiet lot,—they had less to distract them from the saving of their souls. Yet was it not a good lot, but altogether most undesirable, most unfortunate in every way. It is not to be regretted now. To dream of recalling it were not only the vainest of all dreams, but a sort of treason to our best hopes and struggles. It was an unhealthy slumber, from which the nation rose unrefreshed. It was a dead, low, stagnant time, poorly animated now and then with a miserable infidel activity. It was the hard winter of all high principles in Church and State ; a season of corrupt statesmen, of soft-living churchmen, and of an impure people. The land was not

even lying fallow for the sake of after crops ; but its moisture and nourishment were eaten out by tares and trailing weeds, and poisonous herbs. Many a generation must be sown, and come to ear, and be gathered into the barns, before the fields can bring forth as, by God's blessing, they brought forth of yore. It were treason to wish such a state back again.

But now we have different evils to meet. All things are altered ; all things turned the other way. There is scarcely a poor man in the land who does not know the names and somewhat of the characters of men in power, who does not either like or dislike them, who does not call them strange, worldly-sounding names he does not know the meaning of, who does not feel for sorrow or for joy the changes, the constant changes of the country, as though they had been changes in the beating of his own living heart. Yet still our eyes see no further than they did. Most men see no further than themselves. So that with all this new knowledge, which has been given us, we have got no new happiness ; rather have lost somewhat of our old happiness, by losing all our quietness, which, though not happiness, is most near of kin unto it. Whatever else

they may be—and it is useless giving them hard names unless we strive to amend them by amending ourselves—ours are not happy times. They have driven us from those abodes of quiet hearts, “ where self-disturbance hath no place.” They have made us all to toss upon unquiet thoughts, and to be restless. Every body wishes for a change ; no two persons wish for the same change ; and yet all changes cannot be made : and who is to be heard first ? We all feel, except some few, perhaps, who have become gross-hearted from wealth and easy self-indulgence, that we are in a very imperfect and undesirable condition ; and that it certainly will not be a lasting one, whether that which follows be better or worse, which God only knoweth. Men feel, especially if they are poor and humble in life, that they are not happy ; they feel that they are not satisfied ; they feel that they are capable of being far higher, and nobler, and happier than they are, in some other state of things. So it seems it is only the present state of things which keeps them back from their natural rights of being free, and happy, and noble. Therefore they must destroy all they

have now, throw it over the deep sea, and begin afresh, and see what they can gain.

Thus there have been hundreds of plans for beginning afresh, hundreds of human happinesses to make us happy. They have been tried not in England only, but the world over. They have been Christian, half-Christian, un-Christian. There is nothing which has not been tried. Some have been quite independent of God ; some less bold, but not a whit less profane, have borrowed from His holy Word what they liked best, have praised it, patronised it, set about improving it, and relieving it of its once useful but worn-out notions, alien to modern states and churches. But the end of all has been the same,—a brief excitement, and more unhappiness than ever. All they have done has been to lead us further away from the one only remedy, the one only wisdom, the one only stability of our times.

At this day rumours, and gatherings, and tumults, have brought the question nearer home, and made it yet more practical. Many projects, of more or less sagacity and forethought, have been put out by anxious, thinking men. All seem to have agreed that our

state is deeply diseased ; and that it would be imposture only that would venture to predict immediate recovery, or prescribe speedy remedies. Local changes, and the power of government, and the existing laws, can alone keep down the present strugglings, and meet the clamours as they rise. But after all that has been said, the processes which are to heal us in the long run, the remedies in which are bound up hope, deliverance, and safety for the future, gather themselves, in the ablest scheme which has been proposed, into two — emigration and secular education. The great results in a political way of these measures, carried out on a very vast scale, would probably be far short of what is expected of them. But that is not the question here. To us Churchmen it is quite clear they are most insufficient. The ground on which we stand, and the truths by which we live, force this conviction upon us. Most of our present evil comes of want of unity, of our not having centres of unity, lawful, tried, strong, pure, ready at our hands. The evil has begun to work out in irregular unions, irregular seekings after unity, irregular and very unchristian ways of making great collections of souls feel and

act as one soul. We, as Churchmen, of course believe the Church to be a centre of unity, orderly, and appointed of heaven. We, as Churchmen, say, that the history of many centuries plainly shows that nothing on earth beside the Church can be a centre of unity, truly and lastingly, whether it be government, or literature, or what else soever. None of these things have ever made even a show of being centres of unity, except in proportion as they had anchored themselves alongside, and come in contact with the Church. Virtue sometimes went out of her into them : but sooner or later they let it escape. They were not framed for retaining it, or being its home. As Churchmen, then, without disparaging either of them as wise or politic measures, we should probably think of emigration and education in some such way as this,—that to do good they must be carried out not on secular, but on Church principles, and that even thus they are, and must be, quite inadequate to our present straits.

To propose emigration as a remedy, implies a belief that a too abounding population is in great measure the cause of our distress, which is not a deep, and surely is an irreligious, view

of the case. It is much more the unequal distribution of the population, than the pressure of its arithmetical weight, which is the inevitable misfortune. The congregating of multitudes upon particular districts, to an extent which puts them almost beyond the reach of religious civilization, causes temporary and, in some sense, fictitious distresses according to the variations of trade, and keeps up in many ways a state of thirsty excitement, which makes it difficult for ordinary fears or hopes to assail them or bring them under. But what if we do keep throwing off swarm after swarm upon the continents of the New World ? Are we, as heretofore, to our everlasting shame, and, doubtless, one day to our own deserved inglory and discomfort, to colonize as heathen, and not as Christians ? Are we to people fair portions of God's earth, as we have done, almost without the Gospel, and so leave our children's children to become under other suns little better than wealthy, powerful, pagans ? Are we to make emigration a compulsory measure, which seems necessary in order to unburden the country, more in one place and less in another, so as to distribute the benefit

of such a measure, as we want ? Will mere local pressure drive people to emigrate voluntarily where it would be wanted ? Would not compulsory emigration be dangerous politically, and, as sundering ties of an intensely sacred nature, be irreligious also ? And supposing all these difficulties got over, which it is difficult to suppose, for emigration on a vast scale must include some of the wealthy and the great, must have leaders, and priests, and teachers ; and will the wealthy and the great in these selfish times make sacrifices and go ? And, if they will not go, can you without manifest sin compel them ?—But, supposing all these difficulties got over, one very serious consideration still remains. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the excitement, the fever, the discontent, the un settlement which would prevail for a long while among those left behind. Like the families of Egypt, there would scarcely be a house where there would not be a loss and a vacancy. Sorrow for the absence of friends, and numerous relations, the keen pangs of a separation for this life, continually fresh sadness imparted by the news of necessary trial, disease and disappointment among

the emigrants, would mingle turbulently with the golden pictures and dreams realized, and loud calls to come and join, which would on the other hand assail them. The whole face of the land would be rudely and unseasonably ploughed up. Granting however that, notwithstanding all this, emigration is well and necessary, and would at the last bring great relief, yet it must, as population grows, be continually renewed, and such renewals of it would obviously in a few generations uproot the present national character, and create a different one, and we should run great risk therein. And so, balancing one thing against another, we may fear that all would be lost, and the tree die before it brought forth its good fruit ; and any how we may scarcely venture to look upon it as a great, sure, or safe remedy for our present evils, in the way and to the degree it has been put forward.

Education, indeed, goes nearer to touching our evils than emigration. But not if secular education only be intended. Reading and writing, and diffused knowledge, will not affect the disease, except in the way of aggravation. All religious bodies, it is said, confess the need

of education, but all quarrel as to the religious form which it shall take. Meanwhile then, so they say, while the contest about this matter is going on, do not let us be losing time, let us be teaching the people to read, let them not any how go without secular education, while the Church and the Dissenters are quarrelling about religious education. If religion were merely literary, if it were only a separate element of education, an accomplishment, like music, or sketching, there might be some truth in this, however oddly it is stated. But it is not so. The Church claims the right to educate her members, and to educate them by her own doctrines, and out of her own creeds, and through the means of her own priests. The Church claims the right to prevent her members from receiving any other sort of education than this. But not to press that here :—what, after all, would a very considerable spread of secular education effect for us ? If its effects were to be good, at least three generations must elapse before it begins to tell at all upon the people. And even then what more should we have gained, but a new illustration of the few, lowly, words of St.

Paul, “Knowledge puffeth up<sup>1</sup>?” We cannot all be made rich, we cannot all be made wise, we cannot all be made happy. In our minds, much more than in our bodies, it is impossible we can all be in equal strong health. There must be differences and divisions, ranks and bars. Misery will make them where wealth does not : weakness will make them where wisdom does not. Let us suppose for a moment the intellectual powers of the lower orders, and the mass of the people generally, to be called out as much as may be. All at once a new set of distinctions are made among them. New fences are run here and there in every direction ; fences far more galling than the old ones, for rank and power conferred by talent is of all rank and power least readily acquiesced in. A new sort of inequality begins to appear in that part of society. There is as much or more unevenness than before, only the shape of it is altered and shifted. Persons brought up together, inhabitants of the same neighbourhood, of equal industry, and generally (as would be likely from human

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 8.

nature) of greater soberness and purity, would suddenly find what to them would seem a very wide separation made between themselves and their old equals, in many ways ; and all because they were less clever and acute. Well, supposing this were thought advisable, and really a better state of things than the present, (and if a man thinks of it for half an hour he will see to what a great extent, and in what curious ways it would bring in a new state of things,) it must be remembered further, that all the moulds and shapes of our present society and government would by no means hold the fresh order of things ; that it would be unsafe to alter these moulds and shapes till the new state of things were ready ; that yet if the new state of things did not find new moulds and shapes ready before itself, it would inevitably do us a mischief, and that violently ; that the consent of many privileged classes and bodies must be had to alter the present moulds and shapes ; that to force such consent would be iniquitous, and moreover would have to be done through bloodshedding ; that in the end the whole habits of thought of a populous nation must be found to have altered

themselves ; and that there is no instance on record of a nation foregoing the character its history has once worn into it, not even when almost all its old blood has been spilled upon its own fair fields in the madness of civil strife. Now one or more of these considerations will be thought to carry some weight along with it ; and what safeguard, what counteracting force has *secular* education got to offer us, to make it worth our while to run any one or more of these risks ? But what if there is a wisdom, which tells us happiness, and knowledge, and greatness, are not our only ends on earth ; that we have higher, nobler, ends, and aims, and hopes, than these ; that by leading us from following after happiness and greatness, does in reality make us happy by giving us contentedness, and makes us great by lifting us above this world's littleness, and surpasses all earthly knowledge by opening to us the world of spirit, and imparting to us somewhat of the intelligence of angels ? Surely this wisdom is what we want, a wisdom above the wisdoms of all wise men, a wisdom which may be the stability of our times. The poor man can be made no higher and no happier by powers

and rights. His unhappiness is nearer home and deeper in his heart than that politics should lift it off. They cannot make him rich ; they cannot make him great ; and yet they tell him wealth and greatness are happiness : and is not all this mockery ? The poor man can be made no wiser by earthly wisdom. What better is he if he knows the number of the stars, and the pathway of the moon, and the customs of the sun ? What better is he if he knows why the sea keeps months and tides, and the winds blow this way rather than that, and the comet comes after his appointed journey of years ? What better is he if he knows where corn-fields have been red with blood, and green trees scorched with battle, for the vanities of kings or the unruliness of peoples ? Still may the vainest of world-wisdoms open out philosophy, history, and science, for his unhappiness, which is the cause of his turbulence, is nearer home and deeper in his heart, than that world-wisdom should lift it off : and yet they tell him world-wisdom is happiness ; and is not this, too, mockery ? But tell him, on the other side, that his ploughing, and his toiling, and his trading,

cannot keep his soul from being immortal ; tell him he is the son of God ; that heaven is waiting for him ; that angels are ministering to him, yea, and evil spirits troubling themselves to fight against him : tell him the eye, the unsleeping eye of heaven, is open upon his cottage on the moor-edge, by the mouth of the mine, or in the dull, close, sunless town, as widely and as wakefully as on the great queen upon her golden throne : tell him this in early life, let it grow with his growth, and increase with his increase ; let it bring him to the common church, the common prayers, the common Altar, and hold him by the hand as he faints softly and wearily away into the common grave : and how little then will earthly ranks, and bars, and distinctions, and unhappinesses, disturb or ruffle the peace of his soul ! Do not let him awake to all this after a youth of impurity, or a manhood of pride ; in the hurry of repentance, when his soul's eye, long used to darkness, cannot bear the light ; but let it sink gradually into him by early church education, as the white snow melts into the field and makes the corn spring greenly. There might indeed be some result,

some cure, some assuaging of our fret and fever, if a fair part of the population were thus filled with great Christian thoughts, and their hearts lifted heavenward by faith, and hope, and love. It might bring quietness, sober-mindedness, contentedness, submission to the will of God, readiness to do the good which comes to our hands to do, carelessness for the future, knowing it to be in the hand of God, sorrow for the past, knowing it to be our accuser before the judgment seat of Christ, and, for temporal reward, if it were then of any account among us, it might bring to this particular nation, the empire of the West. Then would there be far less noise and clamour, evil will, strife, sedition, political hatreds. Of course man's deeply corrupt nature would always hinder much of this ; yet a good measure of such blessing would be the natural fruit of education if done in a church way, and so with a church blessing, if it were part and parcel of a gathering round a spiritual authority, of riveting again our ties of allegiance to the throne let down among us, whereon He only sitteth Who is man of the substance of His mother, and Very God before all worlds.

This, then, is the remedy up to which we have been working our way all along; an acknowledgment of a spiritual power, a hearty adherence to a centre of unity which is appointed and gifted of heaven and in spite of our sins continued among us still, a submission to Church authority, in the full, complete, and most practical sense of those words. The form and attitude which political uneasiness has of late begun to take, and the manner in which it has expressed itself, has been in a strong, blind, lawless seeking after unity, a turbulent yearning after oneness of feeling and oneness of action<sup>1</sup>. This desire has been em-

<sup>1</sup> By way of a single specimen of the manner in which this feeling is working now, we may take a casual notice out of a newspaper (Newcastle Journal, February 29, 1840.) —“A society, having for its object, by family gatherings in all parts of the world, by publication of facts and arguments, &c., to collect the Christian world into one body, and remove the jarring of sects, has just issued its first prospectus.” To a certain degree temperance societies evidence the same, and free-masonry, so far as it is any thing more than a club: and when it is any thing more, it is profane and against the Gospel. See, for instance, Preston’s Lodge, Oliver’s edition, 1829, p. 6, where it is said to be confined to no particular countries, nor, p. 7, to any parti-

bodied very strikingly in all that has been happening these few years past. It is, at least

cular religion, but to "tame the spirit of fulminating priests :" where the editor seems to consider that it may embrace, so "wise" is it, "*Christians 240 millions, Mahometans 120 millions, Brahminists 115, Lamaites 58, Confucians 5, Jews 8, Fetichees 124, Buddhists 170, Nanknists 4, Zoroastrians three-quarters of a million.*" See also the prayer at p. 32, the charge at p. 57, where the name of Christ is not mentioned, p. 56, on the building of Solomon's Temple, the ceremonies at p. 87, (compare with which Robespierre's public worship of the First Cause at Paris) p. 92, the prayer at the burial service, claiming to enjoy in heaven the "just reward of a virtuous life," the name of Christ left out all through—(the editor, *a clergyman*, thinks this service can scarcely be performed consistently)—p. 110, where a "cheerful compliance with the established religion of the country in which they live, is earnestly recommended" to Masons : "the tenets of the institution interfere with no particular faith, but are alike reconcilable to all." See also the collection of odes ending the book, many of which are too objectionable, on religious grounds, to quote here. Free-masonry was condemned by the Roman Church in 1738 or 39 ; and implicitly by the English Church in the 18th article, which contains an anathema, and is nevertheless contradicted in letter as well as in spirit by several passages in masonic books. As to Holy Scripture, it may be well to make one quotation ; in the charge at initiation into the first degree, occur these words, "As a Mason you are to study the sacred law ; to consider it as the unerring stand-

to the degree in which it has lately prevailed, a new feature in popular disturbances, and one claiming infinitely more respect than is usually accorded to popular grievances, and not to be crushed down, even if that were possible, by the mere weight of martial law. Further,—in the new and more recent forms which religious fanaticism has taken, as for instance in Irvingism, or among the Plymouth brethren, somewhat of a new feature, new at least in modern times though well known of old, has displayed itself: one main doctrine has been that the true Church is one, and that they, and they only, constitute that one Church, and that it has been revealed to them that for unfaithfulness the Church of England, hitherto the true Church, has had her candle-stick removed into their congregations. Now here again we may discover the same feeling at work: a felt want of a centre of unity, and

ard of truth and justice, &c.:” on which the *clerical* editor remarks:—“ In England, the Bible; but in countries where that book is unknown, *whatever is understood to contain the will or law of God.*” These references may be useful to some, who might be attracted, as light minds naturally are, by the secrecy and mystery of this *pythagorean* (Preston, p. 105) institution, without knowing or imagining that it involved irreverence and sin.

an intense desire to find or to create one. The shape then both of political and religious movement among the people indicates the sort of remedy needed, and almost points to it. Some have already discerned the kind of remedy to be applied, but have been somewhat at a loss where to find it; and have imagined that we must create some new centre of unity for ourselves, all that lie round us being either rusted or unreal. Neither is such a view as this at all surprising. From a number of causes, which have been a very long time in operation, Christianity has been degraded into a system of truths, a collection of dogmas, a literary purification, a store-house of high motives, a code of pure laws, a philosophical influence: these are the sort of ideas men have of the Gospel. Its theology and morals have been separated from each other, which is a great evil: and both have been detached from that living person, that heavenly bride, the Church, to whom they had been joined, and apart from whom they had but a half life, with variable, inharmonious power and motion. True, indeed, it is that Christian teaching, detached from its divinely appointed Teacher upon earth, is a system such as earth

never yet saw or has conceived; and, considering how long it has been for all practical purposes detached from the person of the Church, it is little less than marvellous it should have retained its heat and blood so long. But it has been growing weaker in its virtue, while our disease has been yearly becoming more desperate; and now systems and schools, even of Christian teaching, cannot bring it under. They have not life enough, or reality enough in them, to be centres of unity; for they contain within themselves, as their own proper inheritance, the seeds of infinite division. To Christian doctrines, apart from the one living Church, there was not given any power of working moral miracles, of casting devils out of nations, or raising to life again peoples, whose hearts have died within them like a stone, because of wealth, and luxury, and low principles, and abandoned literatures, and civilized unbeliefs. No wonder then that they, who knew not of the Church, should be unable to see in Christianity, considered as a system of theology, any thing beyond an old centre of unity, which was become outworn, and had ceased to be authentic.

But the Church Catholic, a living person, penetrated in every limb with an awful and heavenly life, powerful, strong, indestructible, unchanging, yet infinitely pliable ; intelligent, transcending in gifts, in teaching, in unity, in glory ; mighty, to draw to herself dread, reverence, and love ; capacious to receive into herself all fears, hopes, joys, charities, and souls of men ; living in two worlds, communicating with both by mysteries, lifting the lower into the higher, and bringing down spirit and light from the one into the matter and gloom of the other : the Church Catholic, perfect in every nation, yet including all nations, wise and giving wisdom, free and giving freedom, large-hearted and making men's hearts large, poor and making abundantly wealthy,—this, rightly understood and submissively obeyed, is a centre of unity which cannot fail, a medicine when men's hopes of recovery are past. We may borrow, and alter, and apply to her what a foreign writer with beautiful untruth has said of literature. Look at worldly men, how they struggle after happiness and satisfaction : their wishes, their toil, their gold, are ever hunting restlessly, and after what ? After that which the Churchman has received al-

ready with his new nature ; the right enjoyment of two worlds, here and hereafter : the feeling of himself in others ; the union of many things which this world can never make to go together.

Church authority, as a centre of unity, has some peculiar claims to be heard and reflected on at present. It seems probable that the time is not far distant when society, in no small portion of Europe, will have to be refused and run into quite other moulds from those which keep and define it now. Perhaps it is necessary it should be so ; and well it should be so : any way it seems inevitable. Now, when things begin to break up and to be loosened from the old fastenings, and set in quick and perilous motion, one fixed and steady principle, such as obedience to Church authority, will be of an importance not to be calculated. It will be a warrant of safety at the last. It will be a power of moral attraction sufficient to keep things from wandering too far from their proper places while the change is going on. It will give soberness to disturbed times, and intelligence to confused times, and be a help to all ranks and classes in perplexity. It will carry a state over rough

places ; and infallibly hinder it from breaking into pieces, even in the most deep-seated commotions. It will not interfere in any way with political arrangements, forms of government, framing of laws, or distributions of power, except so far as they may be wicked arrangements ; and then, it would be well for the happiness of the people, as well as their spiritual well-being, that there should be a moral check. Further than this there could be no check. The Church is bound to no forms but her own. She believes no other to be divine. She is a disciple of no school of political thought. She is seen in none, leagues with none, interferes with none. Churchmen, who do so *in her name*, have not her warrant for it. They make her uncatholic for the time and in the place where they do plead her authority for such things.

This is of course not the place to enter at length upon the subject of the Church being considered as a centre of unity, how it is her proper office to be so, how she has been gifted for that office, how she discharges it, under what conditions, with what sort of limitations, with what expansions, with what peculiarities and adaptations. This is an ex-

tensive field, and cannot be traversed now. Meanwhile, at the risk of provoking ridicule and appearing to trifle in a grave matter, I will mention a few *little* ways in which a recognition of Church authority would tell upon the people now; and little ways rather than large ones, both because they are more practical, and illustrate the matter more plainly, and also show us that in order to this recognition we have little or nothing to import, or to create, but much to revive, much to take into our hands which is lying disused by our sides. I need not do more than allude to them: any one by a little steady thinking may see how they would soothe and soften the condition of the lower orders, and, which is of far higher moment, throw themselves upon the side and strengthen the hands of the better and well-ordered part of those classes. If then, as a general rule, the labour of the field and the wheels of the factory were still on the few Saints' days and holydays, which we keep, very trifling pecuniary loss or idle time would be the result; but a character of cheerfulness, a feeling of equality in religious thoughts and privileges with their masters, would be diffused among the people, as well as an example

of self-denial set by them to their workmen as taking the loss upon themselves and not suffering it to weigh upon their servants. If, again, baptisms always took place on Sundays or holydays, and in the public service, and at every poor child's baptism the rich did not sit in their pews as if it did not concern them and were a weariness, but rose, and knelt, and joined in the service with readiness and fervency ; experience in certain places has shown that a good feeling has been generated among the poor far beyond what seemed likely from such a trifle ; and of course a more right feeling would be produced among the rich, who in such cases are far more deficient in it than the poor. Again, it were well the whole indecent system of pews were done away, and the shameful distinctions allowed in Church between the rich and the poor were abolished, being contrary to the express words of St. James (ii. 2, 3, 4). And it is not a little striking that in several places of late the people have come in bodies to occupy the Churches and Cathedrals, and assert their equal right to them. This shows that even this trifle has created a soreness, and therefore to a thinking person has ceased to be a

trifle. Again, supposing the political arrangements regarding the poor could be made to connect themselves with the parish Church and the parish Altar, and be put under Church officers, and reference be made to character, and to sober and communicant paupers, much ill-feeling, harshness, cruelty, and discontent would be done away ; and the fearful sin avoided, which is no otherwise avoidable, of making poverty a crime, of not reverencing old age, and of separating the poor from full communion with their fellow-members and the Body of Christ. Then again, if bishops' powers over the clergy and the rich laity of their dioceses were made larger and more summary, much relief might be in many ways given to the people at large. Priests, who neglected their cures, or gave up their time to unseemly pleasures, or did not take sufficient heed to the poor, or broke their oaths in not following in all things the ritual of the Church, might be reached at once by the poorest and humblest members of Christ's Body. Again, the punishment of excommunication might be brought back into use, which would take away many scandals, and stop all that dissent, which is founded upon displeasure at the lax

discipline of the Church. The rich also, whose sins, and impurities, and unseemly indulgences do not so generally come within reach of the penal laws of the land as those of the poor, might be struck by excommunication and made public examples of, and disgraced, and removed as unworthy of the company of the steady poor; and the sense of justice would be strengthened, which is now weak, from the shameless and sheltered way in which the wealthy sin. Again, there are many rural festivals observed up and down the land in which the higher orders take little or no part, and which are consequently degraded among the poor into times of riot and drunkenness, and the sober poor not able to have any enjoyment of them at all. These might be made Church festivals. The customary processions might be encouraged, and attended by the higher orders. There might be a celebration of the Holy Communion, a collection among the rich for the poor, and a cessation from work. These things will of course seem to many very trifling; and just in proportion as they have not been among the poor. But it must be remembered that these least things have been selected pur-

posely ; and that even these put together and acting over a wide space—a single diocese suppose—would very much alter the inward tone as well as outward face of English society. Surely it is a strangely bold untruth to say, that the modern English Church is the poor man's Church ; that is just what it is not, just what it must become forthwith. Thus, so long as the rich and well-born were what they ought not to be, but what their gold and title give them means to be, the Church would throw herself upon the side of the poor, would defend, and shelter, and dignify them. They would look up to her with affection. They would cling to her, and stand by her. And thus, in case of any revolution, from her deep seat and hold among the poor, she would be able to defend and shelter the rich, and prevent noise, tumult, and bloodshed. There would be less anxiety, and fever, and hidden working of diseased feelings among all classes. The Church would satisfy them with the plenteousness of her house<sup>1</sup>, and give them drink of her pleasures as out of the river. Thus, should it ever please God to restore outward communion to the Church

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xxxvi. 8.

Catholic, and Christendom to be made what it once was before, or better than it was, England, for all her perilous commerce and thirst for gold, might not be backward among the nations. “The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift: like as the rich also among the people shall make their supplication before Thee<sup>1</sup>. ”

Great also would be the change wrought in our politicians and public men by this recognition of Church authority. They would be as much characterized by humility then as they are by pride, and coldness, and intense self-admiration now. They would be more afraid to treat their fellow-countrymen as huge masses to make experiments on, with crude theories or general views imported from abroad, than they are now. They would remember, and practically act upon, what Bishop Taylor says of the strict righteousness the Christian covenant exacts of us all<sup>2</sup>. “This great rule that Christ gives us, does also, and that principally too, concern Churches and commonwealths, as well as every single Christian. Christian parliaments must exceed

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xlv. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Works, vi. 244.

the religion and government of the Sanhedrim. Your laws must be more holy, the condition of the subjects made more tolerable, the laws of Christ must be strictly enforced ; you must not suffer your great Master to be dishonoured, nor His religion dismembered by sects, or disgraced by impiety : you must give no impunity to vicious persons, and you must take care that no great example be greatly corrupted ; you must make better provisions for your poor than they did, and take more care even of the external advantages of Christ's religion and His ministers, than they did of the priests and Levites ; that is, in all things you must be more zealous to promote the kingdom of Christ, than they were for the ministries of Moses." They would remember, what they have too much forgotten, that they have to battle with the world and not with the Church, as they have done. The Church has to overthrow the world for her Master, and it were more politic and crafty to be on her side. For hers is the only successful battle. Men lay wise plans and schemes ; they work mighty changes, fight battles, overrun kingdoms, discover continents, plant colonies, and invent

deep laws : and the world with profane complacency calls them the “*saviours* and regenerators of nations.” Yet are they but a name, a shadow, a dream, a sound. Heaven takes no count of them : only notes their sins like other men’s. Saints make prayers upon their beds ; and angels see that a nation’s punishment is stayed otherwise than as people think, and weep and wonder that blind men will call the staying of punishment their nation’s greatness.

What then is the conclusion of the whole matter ? It is simply this. There have been many forms of government in the world, many institutions, many inventions, to make a nation at unity with itself. They were but ropes of sand. They had power to keep nations together so long as men believed them something more than sand. Men’s faith gives them power. But, when that faith is gone, false faith as it was, they drop off like cords of vanity, as “the seven green withs” of the strong man Samson. Yet, could we once believe the Church of God to be what indeed she is, the setter up of the Cross and the place where it is set up, then would religion be no

longer one of many wisdoms claiming man's heart, belief, and practice, but the fountain into which and out of which all wisdoms ebbed and flowed ; then would politics and literature be run into new shapes and melted down into fresh moulds ; shapes and moulds they have not seen for many centuries ; then would the bars and fences which divide us from one another be broken down, the fretting and beating against which is the cause of all political soreness and disease in nations ; then would our faith make powers visible, which now work invisibly or not at all. For faith brings miracles to light hourly in every heart wherein she dwells. Her office is to lay bare miracles. How have all the forms of the earth been shattered asunder in men's attempt to make them hold what they will not hold : forms of lifeless literature,—they have passed and are now, one and all, pale ghosts that amuse the few and make not the many afraid ; they have passed off because they belonged to the learned and not to the simple also, to the colleges of the wise and not to the pauper sons of God ;—forms of broken governments, —they are thrown aside as being what, one

and all they are, systems worn out, machines superseded ; and why ? because they were for the rich and not for the poor also, for the high-born and the soft-living, and not for those who stooped and toiled in God's earth and sea. There is but one Vessel that will hold the quick new wine of things heavenly, a Vessel hardened in a furnace such as never was for other cause heated upon earth. It is the Church of Christ. They, who would put a nation's life into another vessel, are a vanity, a mockery, yea, the poorest and emptiest by-word that ever was spoken in the hearing of the world. They have false vessels that make a show of holding. By these many will be deceived. Others there are who cannot be deceived, they in Heaven ; and on earth, by God's grace, some few.

THE END.

THE

# P R A Y E R - B O O K ,

A

SAFEGUARD AGAINST RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENT.

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BY THE REV.

FREDERICK W. FABER, M.A.

FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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In returning and rest shall ye be saved ; in quietness and confidence  
shall be your strength.—ISAIAH xxx. 15.

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THE Jews of old time, it mattered not how far distant they might be, though seas and mountains were between themselves and their native land, never prayed without turning their faces towards Jerusalem, the holy city of the great King. It was a centre of unity, in which the tribes met yearly at their solemn festivals, and to which their affections went up always, wherever in the wide world their lot was thrown. So we, in like manner, are furnished with a similar point of unity in our Baptism. There was the beginning of our spiritual life, there was the source and fountain of all our spiritual dignities and titles. All we are and all we have of what is good and pure and heavenly within us, we have from the Spirit Who brooded over the face of those mighty waters. What is called religious expe-

rience is made up of endless changes and fluctuations. Occasional fervors of piety, succeeded by seasons of coldness and of deadness; high and holy vows made, and kept awhile, and broken, and renewed again; victory and defeat, defeat and victory, sinning and repenting, repenting and sinning: this, alas! is but too true a description of the religious state of good men among ourselves. Of course so long as the taint of original sin remains even in them that are regenerate, it is not possible to arrive at a state of perfection in this world. There must be falls, there must be infirmities, clinging about us, and keeping us back in our way to Heaven. Man's best estate has still the spot of sin upon it, and his strength is after all in the confession of his weakness. But still, granting most fully all which Holy Scripture and our own consciences bid us grant, we cannot acquiesce in that state of changing and backsliding and continual beginning again, which many are glad to look upon as a sad but necessary evil. When we seriously and thoughtfully read the Holy Scriptures, and are content modestly to receive the teaching therein contained, in its plain, natural, grammatical sense, we cannot but acknowledge that a height of Christian attainment is there put before us as

possible, which is far beyond the present standard of holiness. *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God*<sup>1</sup>. These are plain words, yet it is difficult to see what meaning we are to attach to them in these most worldly times, without explaining them away, so as not to condemn ourselves.

And, when we read the records of the early Church, we find truly that the holiness of those primitive Saints was something very different from ours. We have degenerated from them in all things. Seven times a day, after the example of holy David, were they at their prayers: we think it much to attend Church regularly twice a week. The Word of God was seldom out of their hands; some of them knew the whole of it by heart: alas! how many are there among us who allow a day to pass away without opening that blessed Book! In self-denial, they could say with St. Paul, that they were in watchings and in fastings often, and, with the bold Apostle, could protest that they died daily, and that they kept under their bodies and brought them into subjection. We, on the contrary, gather our comforts, our luxuries, and elegances about

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iii. 9.

us, dwell in the midst of softness and self-indulgence, and would fain flatter ourselves all the while that we are treading in the steps of the Son of God, Who for our sakes, yet not surely that we should wax wanton in our liberty, led a life of toil and suffering, poverty and contempt, mortification and austerity. Such too, in their measure like their Master, were the bright lights of primitive antiquity. The time would fail me to tell of Martyrs and Confessors, Bishops and Doctors, who, through the might of early piety and in the freshness of early faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, received in torture the bright red crown of Martyrdom, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. There was a healthy vigour and hardness, a zeal and a roughness, chaste, severe, and uncompromising, that contrasts strangely with the feeble and effeminate piety of modern times.

If it is easy for the reader of church history to institute this comparison, it is as easy to discover the causes of the difference. They are mainly three. *First, the less frequent solemnization of the Holy Eucharist.* The early Christians received that great Sacrament once every Sunday at least. We think it much to receive it once a

month. Man did eat Angels' Food. It was their daily nourishment. How strong then must they have been who went forth to battle sustained by the Body of their Lord and Saviour, the everlasting Son of God; and with what cheerfulness and alacrity did they brace themselves up to meet danger, whose hearts were gladdened continually with the spiritual Wine of His most precious Blood! The grace they received had not time to wear out in its contact with the world before it was refreshed again. They lived always in the same earnest and affectionate piety which we perchance may feel for the first few days after we have received that blessed Sacrament, when all the world seems dull and uninviting, and our hearts are burning within us because of the felt presence of the Son of God.

The *second* cause of the decay of piety is our *forgetfulness of Holy Baptism*. In ancient times men had it continually in their thoughts. They could scarcely speak or write on any religious subject without the discourse turning on Baptism at last. Children were educated simply as baptized children. They were taught that things were right or wrong in proportion as they affected the Baptismal vow. Sins were considered more or less heinous as they were supposed to

stain Baptismal purity. Baptism was to them all in all; because it was there they found the Cross of Christ set up. It was in the Font that the unspeakable riches of Christ were poured out most freely, most mightily, most abundantly. They thought no words too great, no names too magnificent to express its transcendent dignity. They called it “the new birth, the regeneration, the chariot carrying us to God, the great circumcision, the key of the kingdom, the robe of light, the sacrament of eternal salvation :” and an old Bishop<sup>1</sup> of the African Church expressly says that in Baptism “the faith and profession of the believers meets with the ever-blessed Trinity, and is recorded in the register of Angels, where heavenly and spiritual seeds are mingled ; that from so holy a spring may be produced a new nature of the regeneration, that, while the Trinity meets with the faith of the baptized, he that was born to the world may be born spiritually to God. So God is made a Father to the man, and the holy Church a Mother.” Now how like all this is to the way in which St. Paul talks of Baptism; his frequent use of the words, *washed*, *sprinkled*, *sealed*, *laver of regeneration*, and the like; and St. Peter’s express words that *by Baptism are we*

<sup>1</sup> St. Optatus cont. Donatist.

*saved, answering to that of St. Paul, buried with Christ in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God.* And how unlike all this is to the few cold, thankless, and occasional allusions we make to our own new birth, and the heavenly privileges in which we were then and there arrayed !

A third reason of our degeneracy is to be found in the *absence of Church discipline*, to punish with spiritual censures and public penitences gross and notorious immorality. At the Reformation men's minds were in a constant tumult and distraction, and, before the Discipline of the Church was finally settled in convocation, King Edward died, and the fierce and bloody triumph of Popery under Queen Mary threw all things back into confusion. Therefore it is that once a year, on Ash Wednesday, when the Commination is read, the Church reminds us of the godly Discipline there was in the Primitive Church, and utters a mournful complaint that the said Discipline is not restored again, “ which is much to be wished.” The world has proved too strong for her, and that is still kept back which can alone restore us to the high and loyal-hearted piety of our Christian ancestors. It will be enough on this head to leave the subject with the

eloquent and weighty judgment of the venerable Hooker<sup>1</sup>. “No doubt,” says he, “but penitency is a prayer, a thing acceptable unto God, be it in publike or in secret. Howbeit as in the one, if men were wholly left to their own voluntary meditations in their closets, and not drawn by laws and orders unto the open assemblies of the Church, that there they may join with others in prayer, it may be soon conjectured what Christian devotion that way would come unto in a short time. Even so in the other we are by sufficient experience taught how little it booteth to tell men of washing away their sins with tears of repentance, and so to leave them altogether to themselves. O Lord, what heaps of grievous transgressions have we committed, the best and perfectest, the most righteous amongst us all, and yet clean pass them over unsorrowed for and unrepented of, only because the Church hath forgotten utterly to bestow her wonted times of Discipline, wherein the public example of all was unto every particular person a most effectual means to put them often in mind, and even in a manner to draw them to that which we now altogether and utterly forget, as if penitency was no part of a Christian man’s duty.”

<sup>1</sup> Book v.

Thus it is that what is in the present day called the religious world is very different from the Church of old time. The spiritual condition of its members is different, and consequently the spiritual remedies to be applied must be different also. Persons have been brought up without any reference to their Baptism ; and very many have come to years of discretion without any thing like an abiding sense of religion. Such they are to outward appearance. But a new life is yet hid within them. The seed may from negligent education or other untoward circumstances have lain dormant, as the spring-time of the natural year is often unseasonably late. It is not dead, but sleepeth. The power of God is still folded up within it, to be put forth at His good pleasure. Hence it is we sometimes see young children who on their death-beds evince a thoughtfulness, a spiritual growth, and an intelligent apprehension of things heavenly, almost beyond belief. It is because the young plant is forced, as it were, by the circumstances among which it is placed. It does not wait the slow and tardy process of ordinary blossoming ; but springs all at once to its full bloom. The light of heaven is shed for a short while about it, and it is forthwith transplanted to a quieter and purer home than this.

And it is the same with older persons. That which is now called *conversion* is but the wakening of Baptismal life, more or less sudden as the case may be. Some sharp sickness or bereavement, some narrow escape, some unexpected good fortune, or other special Providence shocks a man into a consciousness of his Baptismal powers. He is all at once aroused from the sleep of sin. The scales fall from the eyes, and he finds that he has unconsciously been living in a world of spirit and of spiritual things, while he thought of nothing but the base and empty pleasures of sense.

Now here is the danger. The zeal of new converts is proverbial. They are but children in religion; yet unfortunately men in powers and passions and affections. The feelings are very much heated and excited, and the judgment shaken for a while, as well it may be, both by a view of the horrible dangers it has escaped, and the unspeakable mercies that are open to it. Men in this state of mind are not content to be quiet. Quietness in religion is only the fruit of a mature faith. The Jordan may *seem* but small and insignificant in comparison with the rivers they themselves would choose. They cannot bring themselves to believe in its healing powers; and to wash therein seems too poor a return for the exu-

berant warmth of their zeal. They forget God has chosen that little stream : and that His choice is all we have to do with ; and so they hurry self-willed to the mightier, but ungifted, rivers of Damascus. Men are wayward in every thing. They will have their own way even in religion. This is a fertile source of Dissent. The Church gives no room for singularity. She is the net of which our Lord spake, full of fishes both bad and good : and the day of separation is not come yet. Whatever she does she does as every body else does it, as her Master did while He was on earth, when He sat at meat with publicans and sinners. The Saints of God are hid within her bosom, scarcely seen by the world except in the faint shinings of their good works, which are so many reflections of the glory of the Lord. She bids new converts come to Church, and to Sacraments, and to pray, and to read the Holy Scriptures ; things which many worldly men do from habit, from hypocrisy, from early association, from glimmerings of good feeling. She bids them come out from the world, and be separate ; but it must be in their own hearts and within her bosom. There must be no bustle, no changing about, no ostentation, no singularity, no excitement ; all of which are worldly and belong to worldly things.

Now if a person leaves the Church professing religious grounds, such as that it is not strict enough or pure enough for him, and that he is called upon to do some great thing for the Lord, he at once becomes a marked character. He has committed himself to that of which he does not in the least understand the importance. He has entered upon a track, which will lead him he knows not where. However, at the first, he is a person of consideration and importance in the party to which he attaches himself, which no individual ever is in the Church. And so he separates from the Body of Christ, which St. Paul tells us is the Church, the one Catholic and Apostolic Church. Alas! all this is a miserable and desperate delusion, to say no worse of it. Many and many a man has so left the Church, and, as the excitement of novelty went down, got tired of his new friends, and thus has gone from sect to sect, finding no rest for the sole of his foot; like a poor dove that flies farther and farther from home, and then, when she would fain return, has not strength of wing to carry her, but sinks to earth in a waste and dreary place. And so he goes on till at length he has settled down into the cold and repulsive creed which denies the Divinity of the Son of Man; and even that too, naked, barren, and comfortless as it is, even that

fails him at last, it has failed, and must fail all its followers, in the chill and desolate and hopeless hour of death.

Men soon find that the excitement of their first feelings gradually subsides : and then they fancy their love is waxing cold. But this is not necessarily the case. Do we not find the same with our parents ? We do not always feel our love to them so sensibly as to others ; but is not our love to them stronger and deeper all the while ? The thing is, that custom prevents our feeling it. So it is in religion : and if we once get safely through the dangerous excitement of our earliest penitent feelings, we shall go on calmly and religiously, treading a path of pleasantness and peace unutterable. Now it is the Prayer-Book, and that mainly, which is a Churchman's safeguard against religious excitement. There is a calm fulness of devotional feeling breathing, like the low notes of music, through all its services, a high and elevated chastity, coupled with an affectionate reverence, which gives to its prayers a power, such as accompanies the language of inspiration. When a man is first awakened to a sense of religion, and the waters of Baptism begin to stir within him, he finds himself in some such state as this. He is surrounded by duties to do,

evil things to be left undone. He has all his old habits to unlearn, and new ones to learn in their place. His soul is overwhelmed with a flood of thoughts and feelings, torn different ways with hopes and fears, and wishes and anxieties, distracted with perplexed and contradictory views of things. He does not know where to turn himself, or what to begin upon first. The Holy Bible itself only adds to his confusion. It is like a wilderness to him. He is at a loss where to find what is applicable to his own case. He is dazzled and lost in the number and the brightness of the glories which lie about him. A multitude of doctrines, of precepts, of characters demand his attention, and all of them at once. Now to save himself from settling into imperfect notions or contracted views of the truth as it is in Jesus, his only way is to fall in with the system of the Prayer Book, at whatever time of the year it may be that the Holy Spirit unlocks the fountains of his heart. What that system is, I propose now to show you.

The Christian Year is regulated, as you well know, by the life of our most blessed Lord and Saviour. We are here in this world with our loins girded and our lamps burning, waiting for the bridegroom. The Church, therefore, on the four first Sundays of the ecclesiastical year, calls

upon us to prepare for the joyous festival of our Saviour's Advent. Christmas Day, The Massacre of the Holy Innocents, the Circumcision of Christ, and His Epiphany, which is the birthday of the Gentile Church, follow in quick succession. On this last great event the Church in the fulness of her joy dwells for five or six Sundays, when she abruptly breaks off on Septuagesima Sunday, three Sundays before Lent, that we may not pass too quickly and too unpreparedly from a season of joy and festive thoughts to one of dimness and penitential tears. By this time we are sobered and subdued, and saddened by the recollection of our sins; and, as our Saviour passed away from the world by the leading of the Spirit, for forty days of fasting and temptation and spiritual conflict in the wilderness, so the Church, like the moon going behind a cloud, enters the solemn season of Lent. The five Sundays which intervene are still festivals; but the collects are of a more humble and pensive nature. As we approach Easter the gloom of Passion week gets thicker and deeper until Good Friday, the day of shame when our sins crucified the Lord of life, and which we yet call *Good* for the precious gift it gave us, redemption from everlasting slavery. Through Easter Eve we wait in silence while our Lord is

laid in His Sepulchre of stone ; till the Easter sun begins to rise, and the Sun of Righteousness rises with it with healing on His wings ; and the Lord appears to us in the Holy Sacrament, as He did to Simon, when He first arose, and when He was made known at Emmaus in the breaking of bread. For three whole days this high Festival is prolonged, till on the Wednesday in Easter week we return to our worldly occupations. For five Sundays more the Church is with her risen Lord, till on Ascension Day she sees Him received up to glory. And, as she may not be with Him yet, but must remain on earth both a widow and a bride, she prays that we may in heart and mind thither ascend and with Him continually dwell. One Sunday more, and we arrive at the Feast of Pentecost, Whitsunday, and celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Ghost when the Church was endued with that power from on high, which shall not fail her until time shall be no more. This festival also for its greatness is prolonged three days, there being a service both for Monday and Tuesday in Whitsun week. Lastly, as in the Name of the Trinity we were first baptized and by that mysterious Name we must be saved, the Church calls upon us, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal

Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity. For, knowing our weakness and our want of faith, and our irreverent boldness in prying too curiously into things which Angels only desire to look into, she in her wisdom had prayed for us the Sunday and all the week before, that we might have a right judgment in all things. After this follow four or five and twenty Sundays, which, as they celebrate nothing, are simply called the Sundays after Trinity. These are times of stillness and retirement. The first half of the year the Church by mighty and spirit-stirring festivals kept raising our love to Christ to its very height. Now she bids us act out in common life those feelings we have gained. She bids us modestly and meekly live holy lives as the only worthy fruits of those high and noble affections. Thus the shining pathway of her year keeps mounting higher and higher till it touches the adorable Trinity, when it again sinks silently down in awe till Advent comes round once more.

Beside this, she has sprinkled lesser festivals all over the year, like fragrant flowers to refresh us, in which she celebrates the Blessed Virgin, the Baptist, and the Holy Apostles and Evangelists. One she has set apart in honour of St. Michael and all Angels, that we may duly reverence those

bright guardians who are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation : and another to the commemoration of All Saints, the multitude that no man can number, that we may not forget the Dead, knit together with us in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical Body of Christ our Lord. In the course of this holy year, the Psalms are read through twelve times in her daily services, the Old Testament once through with parts of the Apocrypha, and the New Testament three times except the Revelations. Thus in a calm and clear order the life of our blessed Saviour and all He did for us, the doctrines of our most Holy Faith, and the examples of the most eminent Saints, are brought before us one after the other without any confusion ; and with services so wonderfully adapted as to stir the heart of the coldest, and win the admiration of the worldly man, even where they cannot interest his affections.

Here then is our remedy, here our safeguard against religious excitement—in the Prayer-book. It is handed down to us by the wisdom and the piety of ancient days, and consecrated by the memory of the Dead, whom it has guided so faithfully through the tossing world to their eternal rest. Its daily psalms and lessons, and its simple collects, form a manual of private or

family devotion, where the public service is unhappily disused, such as the most affectionate fervours of a sober-minded piety could desire. Thus the Church, like a wise Mother, keeps feeding us with the bread of life with an unsparing hand: and as the Apostles gave the bread to the people, which the Master first had blessed, so does she from Him rightly divide the word of truth to those that seek it: and yet, when all are satisfied, her treasure is not less. Each day and week, each season of the year is furnished with its own peculiar subject for religious meditation. We know that what may be done at any time is for the most part left undone altogether. Were we left to ourselves, there would be doubtless many times when we should not meditate on holy things, simply because no thought was ready to our hands; and many subjects would probably be entirely omitted, or not dwelt upon sufficiently. But now we have always matter for pious reflection. Some one heavenly thought is given us by the Church to carry in our hearts day by day into the throng of toil and business; and there it dwells ready at any time to come to our aid against temptation, to put impure and wandering thoughts to flight, to fill up idle minutes which Satan else would occupy, and to be as it were a sanctifying leaven to all our worldly schemes and cares. But

there is another blessing yet which comes to us by the use of the Prayer-book. There are in the land many vast and reverend Cathedrals, many Churches and Chapels, where the voice of the Church is still lifted up in her daily Services. There are many Christian families, whose day begins and ends with the Prayer-book in their domestic worship ; and many private Christians also who use its prayers to the joy and consolation of their hearts. Thus the poor in their lonely cottages, scattered through the land, may turn their eyes to the village Church as to their little Jerusalem where their fathers worshipped ; and, as they use the Church prayers, may feel that many loyal hearts are that day, and every day, joining with them in the same devotions. The smoke of the incense goes up from a hundred altars, but it rises to the throne of grace as one people's one offering, their daily sacrifice of prayer and praise, the smell of a sweet savour to the Lord, because of which, *while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease*<sup>1</sup>. Thus the Prayer-book realizes in a way the glorious Communion of Saints. The humblest member of the Church need not, cannot feel solitary in his religious course. His path may be rugged,

<sup>1</sup> Gen. viii. 22.

but it cannot be dreary. We all of us have surely had seasons of trial and weariness when our spirits would have fainted within us, had we not known of a certainty how many brothers there were treading the same path, using the same prayers, and thinking the same holy thoughts as ourselves.

We have at best but little spiritual strength : and excitement wastes in occasional and vehement outbreaks that healthy vigour which the duty of unceasing vigilance calls for every day. Satan it may be retires for a season, when the fit of elevation is upon us, well knowing that the weary spirit must soon sink down into a helpless lassitude, a prey to his wily and destructive arts ; and that then the time for his attack is come. We cannot always live in that unnatural state. The fever must be followed by exhaustion sooner or later, as our temperament may be. The very largeness of a penitent's heart, the very generosity of his zeal is oftentimes a snare to him. And he cannot be too frequently reminded, that the most ordinary duties are hard enough for him to perform at first.

The daily round, the common task  
Will give us all we ought to ask,  
Room to deny ourselves, a road  
To bring us daily nearer God.

If we rise every morning with a firm resolve to make some self-denial that day, to do something, however trifling, for the honour and service of God, we need not go out of our way to find it. *My son, the Lord will provide a ram for a burnt offering*<sup>1</sup>. Some chance victim or other will be caught in the thicket by our own wayside, that will serve for a reasonable and acceptable sacrifice. In worldly pleasures we all know how transient and unsatisfying excitement is, how jaded and spiritless it leaves the mind afterwards, and how it untunes us for duty or for serious things. So it is in Religion. It is easy for persons of quick temperament to keep up a false, though it must be an intermittent, heat by some means or other through life. It is *possible* to feed the dying lamp with the same unhallowed fire. But, oh ! how awful the thought that a spirit should leave this world, not calm and reverent and self-collected, but passing rudely into the presence of Almighty God, sustained by the false and feverish delusion of overwrought and unsound feelings. Let us rather go on leaning on the arm of the Church all the year through ; and, by God's blessing, we may die as calmly as we have lived, at the foot of the Cross ; and our souls may pass with a gentle

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxii. 8.

shock, as He sees best for us, to that happy and tranquil Paradise, where, with Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles, the spirits of just men abide, waiting for the Lord; whose portion is, where God grant ours may be also, among glorious hopes and visions and mysterious joys.

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*The Collect for Easter Even.*

Grant, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of Thy blessed Son our Saviour JESUS CHRIST; so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections, we may be buried with Him; and that through the grave and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection, for His merits Who died and was buried, and rose again for us, Thy Son JESUS CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

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A

HELP AGAINST TIME.

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BY THE REV.

FREDERICK W. FABER, M.A.

FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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He made the moon also to serve in her season for a declaration of times and a sign of the world. From the moon is the sign of feasts. The month is called after her name, increasing wonderfully in her changing, being an instrument of the armies above.—*Eccl. xliii. 6.*

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# THE CHURCH CALENDAR,

## A HELP AGAINST TIME.

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THERE are many days in a year ; and in every one of them we are all of us thinking and saying either how quick the time passes or how slow. Those who are engaged in business, and have almost more to do every day than one day will hold, are continually complaining how quick the time passes : those who are idle, languid, useless people, who are weak enough and ignorant enough to believe they have nothing to do but to amuse themselves, are continually complaining how slow the time passes. Again : those who are in strong bodily health, and are from that in good spirits and cheerfulness, wonder at the quiet way in which time runs past them, like a summer stream that makes no noise in its going ; but those

whom age or sickness has confined to their weary chambers, who lie awake all night, in pain and fretfulness, listening to the different hours as they come heavily one after another, and murmuring for the day,—these are miserable because time goes so sluggishly. When we are looking forward to any pleasure or enjoyment, we are eager for the time to pass away quickly ; and, in like manner, when we are in sorrow and suffering, we are equally anxious for the rapid flight of time. So, too, there is scarcely a day in which parents do not teach their children, and masters their scholars, and friends warn their friends, and the Church warns all men, not to lose their time, because it passes away. Thus we are for ever thinking about time, speaking about time, and acting with reference to time. And as the Church calendar was invented of old to help us against time, it may not be unpractical to ask ourselves a question—simple, indeed, to all appearance, yet by no means easy to answer—*What is time?* What is the meaning of this word that is always in our mouths ? What is this strange power, or economy, or tyrant, or whatsoever it be, which, like the air we

breathe, insinuates itself into all our thoughts and actions, makes itself felt every where, and felt as a hard master over us ? What is time ? Think of it as we will, place it in whatever light we will, there is but one answer to the question—*It is a mystery.*

Now, let no one think that this is a mere matter of speculation, a question, curious and interesting, but not affecting our practice. If it be true that time is so continually in our thought, it must be practical to get some true notions about it, and to give it a religious meaning. We shall then be more strongly impressed with the recollection that it is one of the most fearful of those talents for which we shall have to give account at the judgment-seat of Christ ; and also when we begin to see what time is, we shall be more anxious to take refuge from its tyranny, its unreality, and its changings in the fulness and the substance of eternity.

Time is not a reality, because it is not and it cannot be eternal. It would be a contradiction to say it was. We may talk of past, present, and future. To us they may seem widely different things, though they are not really so :

they are but the outsides of things ; the outside of eternity, under which is the eternal on-flowing of all things and spirits, whether of earth or heaven ; a flowing which has no motion, fast or slow, no colour, dark or light, no sound, or tide, or change, or resting ; part of the unseen, unheard Will of God, not to be comprehended or spoken of. Past, present, and future, are men's names for the outside of all this ; different names, because they have different colours. The past has a dark and gentle light upon it, and the future is in sunny, shifting mist, and the present is colourless ; for we are yet too near to see how memory will paint it, and too much busied with it to remember how we once saw it with the light of hope upon it. There is but one past ; and that is all we leave behind when we are judged ; and what else is that but sin ? “ That which hath been is now ; and that which is to be hath already been ;”—this is the *nature* of time ;—“ and God requireth that which is past ;” and this is the *meaning* of time to ourselves<sup>1</sup>.

Now let us think of some of the ways in

<sup>1</sup> Eccl. iii. 15.

which we are influenced and affected by time. We see that the whole external world is regulated by it. The sun rises and sets within his proper limits ; and the moon is a faithful witness in heaven. The great sea keeps its own calendar by its tides; the earth by her seasons, spring and autumn, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest. Now all these are so many ways of marking time ; for when twelve months are over, all things begin again as before. We are compelled, whether we will or not, to follow these changes, to obey them, and adapt ourselves to them. Our toil, our business, our pleasures, our dress, our way of living, are all forced to accommodate themselves to the changes of the year. We cannot help ourselves. Time is a law of God, and therefore it is too strong for us. We should often be glad to shorten one season or lengthen another ; but it may not be. So here is one way in which we are affected by time.

But it is not only the natural world which is regulated and governed by time. The world which we make for ourselves,—the world of sin and sorrow, the world of trouble and pleasure,—this is also most completely beneath

the hand of time. We have fixed days and hours, and weeks and months, for doing all things. We contrive instruments for telling us how our very minutes are passing. We divide time into the smallest portions ; and in every one of those portions we have something to do or suffer. So here is another way in which we are put beneath the dominion of time.

But more than this, time possesses an almost irresistible authority over our feelings, our affections, and our happiness. It is a sad thing to be in sorrow ; yet there are many of us who have lost parents, or children, or friends, who would fain have kept alive within our hearts the same keen and lively memory of them, as we had when first they died. But time will not let us : it hurries us along ; and our impressions grow fainter and fainter, till at last they almost die away. Then in our friendships and our loves time grievously interferes with us. It will not allow the glow of our affection to continue. We cease to love friends we have loved before, for no other reason than that the lapse of time has cooled our love, and we were not able to withstand

its power. And as it interferes with our affections so does it with our happiness. Time is so unsatisfactory a thing when it is with us, that we are always discontented with the present. Young men are always wishing to be old, and old men to be young. Men can love the future, and they can love the past: scarcely any can rest contented in the present. Besides which, it often comes across us as a melancholy thought, that all this will go on just as well, just as happily, when we are dead and gone. Men will have our houses and our gardens, and will be glad and happy therein. They will walk about the same streets, and have the same joyous meetings, when we shall be slowly and neglectedly falling back into the cold earth out of which we came; and they who loved us will have laid us therein, shed a few slight tears upon our coffin, gone to their pleasure or their toil, and straightway forgotten all about us. And yet they are not unfaithful or unaffectionate. It is time's fault, not theirs.

Surely these thoughts about time are very profitable to us; or at any rate they may be made so: for they show us what a tyrant time

is ; how it bears us onward with an unfeeling violence, not allowing us one hour's respite for the quiet indulgence of our holiest and most natural affections. They show us, too, which is a great thing, that time is something quite distinct from ourselves ; they point out that there is something within us which is continually craving for rest, which is weary of following time up and down in all its changes, and is miserable in that perpetual agitation and hurry and motion into which it is thrown by time. Nothing can prove to man more strongly his own immortality, than his dislike of time and his unhappiness while beneath its power.

Thus a thoughtful mind might have got so far towards seeing what a mystery time is, independent of the Bible. He might have seen that it was something which influenced all his thoughts and actions ; something from which he could not escape, and which would leave him in the end he knew not where, only it would be helpless, and hopeless also. Thus it was, to get rid of this mystery, that the heathen of old days made time into a god ; that is, they believed, or tried to make themselves

believe, that time was eternal. Yet we, who are made heirs of heaven and partakers of the divine nature, who can die no more, because Christ has once died for us all; who have bread from heaven, even the Flesh of the Incarnate Word, whereon we feed, whereby we receive fullest remission of sins, and take into ourselves the seed and the earnest of a blessed resurrection;—we who are thus from mere mortals made by holy Baptism into sons of God, think far less about time, about what it is, and what it means, and what we have to do with it, than the heathen did. They wondered at it: we let hour after hour slip by, and take no account of the mystery. They were uneasy and unhappy about it: it never disturbs us in our business or our pleasure; it never disturbs us even in our sins. They made a god of it, and worshipped it, and did all they could to propitiate its awful power: we never remember that it is a messenger of the one true God, that it tells us that the world's end keeps hastening, and that the fire of judgment draweth nearer and nearer to us day by day, and night by night. So far, then, independent of the Bible, we could see that time was a mystery.

Now in the Bible no explanation is given at all : but mystery is made far deeper. We know that the world was 4000 years old when God gave His only begotten Son to take upon Him our nature and to be miraculously born of a pure Virgin. Yet the Bible calls Him the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Abraham had been long dead and buried, and his sepulchre was in the Holy Land in the days of Christ's humiliation. Yet the Lord tells us that Abraham rejoiced to see His day and was glad. Nay, more than this, we are taught that Christ could not come before He did, that it was not well He should come before He did, because it was not yet the fulness of time. So you see time had power to keep back our blessed Lord from coming. And when He was on earth, He speaks of His time not being yet come ; so that time had something to do with His death. Moreover, in the Scriptures we learn that time has nothing to do with God ; that His power and wisdom are not bounded by what men call past, present, and future ; that He is the first and the last, Who was and is, and is to be, in Whom and by Whom, and through Whom do all things consist, from

Whom they spring, and upon Whom they most entirely and utterly depend. But the Bible not only deepens the mystery of time, but extends its power. The dead, that is, our friends and relations and forefathers who have left this world—the spirits, are under the influence of time. For their souls beneath the altar cry unto God, and say, “How long ! O Lord, how long !” Lastly, we learn from the Bible also, that there shall be a very great day, whereon an Angel<sup>1</sup> shall go forth and swear by the God Who made all things and liveth for ever, that there shall be time no longer.

These things are very mysterious. But they are written for our instruction. We live in time, we shall be judged for what we do in time ; we shall still live on, we shall still be alive, when time shall be no longer. With us eternity depends on time. Now then, if the Bible tells us all these mysteries about time, and many more which I have not mentioned, what does it tell us of time as connected with ourselves—as practical to ourselves ? First of all these mysteries themselves are very practical ;

<sup>1</sup> Rev. x. 6.

they make us afraid of time, of letting it slip away from us unseen, of misspending it. Secondly, God puts time before us as a witness, for or against us, as the case may be. The years go round and round. They make no noise as they go. Night steals quietly upon the day ; and morning light breaks in the east in beauty and in silence. But every year, as it passes away from us, goes to lay its long and sad account at the foot of the throne of God. That throne is set up in its own place somewhere in the world. We cannot tell where it is ; perhaps nearer ourselves than we imagine, perhaps in the midst of us. To this throne does each year come to testify of all things which it has seen, all the sins, no matter how secret, which all the men in all the nations of the earth have committed ; that God may note them in His Book. It is a faithful witness : it forgets nothing, it conceals nothing ; it is God's minister going up and down among men to spy out all their actions. We cannot hide ourselves from time. It is like the eye of Him Who made it. It does not close : it does not sleep : it does not weary of its task : it is awake for evermore.

But time is more than a witness against us, it is our enemy. It cuts off the wicked, very treacherously giving them no warning. It shortens our repentance; it will not wait, or give us respite, while we try to repair whatever we have done amiss. But the Church of Christ gives us protection against the enmity of time. It disarms it. It sanctifies it. It takes us beneath its wing, and teaches us, if only we are obedient, how to make time witness for us, instead of against us, at the throne of God.

Let us think of some of the ways in which the Church does this. Time is the property of the world: at least it seems so; for the world takes it, and fills it quite full, full even to wearying us, full even beyond what it will hold of business, schemes, cares, toils, labours, trades, vanities, pleasures, politics, literatures, sciences, sins of its own. The Church will not allow of this. She insists upon all time being hers. She takes every morning for her own, and every evening for her own; and calls them hours of prayer. In old times, when her faith was stronger, and her sons more loyal and less mingled up with a literary or money-making world, she had seven hours of prayer

a day, the seven canonical hours. Alas ! we need not wish for her old seven : we do not keep her modern two ! She takes the first day of every week, and will not allow the world to have any share in it. She will not think of poor people being made to work, or rich people left to their own vain employments ; on the day when her Spouse rose from the dead, and finished our redemption. More than this, she gives every year days to the Blessed Virgin, days to each of the Apostles, and other saints of God, whereon their memories shall be kept holy, and her children shall be glad of heart. So too does she remember the Holy Angels, and above all, the great and marvellous acts of her dearest Lord while He was yet on earth. These are her own days. She calls them holy-days. She has made them for our sakes, for her children's sake, to help them in redeeming the time, because the days are so very evil and profane. Further she is so very jealous of the world, that she will not leave it quiet even on its own working-days. She establishes days of fasting, painful mortification, hardness, self-denial, and great weeping for sin. She kills the world in all our hearts year after year by

her long, hard, forty days of Lent. And all this for the love she bears us. Now, this is one way in which the Church helps us against time: and how are we obedient to her authority? Remember she has her authority, not of man, but of God: the Holy Ghost is with her and within her; her words are not to be regarded lightly. She is the Bride of Christ, and the Bride, as well as the Spirit, say "Come." She is the representative of Christ. How have we used the helps she gives us against the tyranny of time? Did you, for example, during last year, during 1839, in a humble and child-like spirit observe her fasts and festivals, Sundays and great feasts—such as Easter and Christmas, Ascension Day, and Whitsuntide—I do not say strictly, but as well as you could, and with much grief that you have not observed them better? Have you always when you could—I know it is not always possible,—but have you when you could, come to church on Saints' days; and at least marked fasts by some self-denial for Christ's sake? Have you not preferred the world; and with the church-bells sounding in your ears, have closed them against the charmer, and gone rather to business than

to religion, to folly, sin, mirth and levity, than with a solemn heart of prayer to the foot of the Cross of Christ? How many a one is there in our foreign colonies, in far-off lands, serving their country amid dangers and disease, hardship and solitude, who would give worlds to hear that sound which they remember in their childhood, or to see the decent and beautiful solemnities of their mother Church again! How many a missionary is there in lonely places, who sinks to his bed with no one to join his evening prayer, but the stars in the heavens above him, and the wind of night sounding about him on some far Indian shore; and he too would weep for joy if he might join the godly company of worshippers in his own land, to keep the holy days, and the joyful festivals of the saints. The Church has done what she could. Her holy years pass one by one from us to the throne of God. Have they no evil tale to tell of you, of broken fasts and the memories of the Saints of Jesus neglected and despised, and Jesus neglected too?

The Church is of course a help against time in other ways beside her calendar. Let us note one or two of them. The Christian

Priesthood with its Apostolical succession is one of the chief ways in which the Church defends herself and us against time. That very high and holy institution keeps the deposit of sound doctrine, and the right and due administration of the justifying Sacraments, from the harm which time might do them. Generation after generation from the Apostles, and with a perpetual Apostolate in the order of Bishops, the Priesthood has kept descending, guarding the pure Word of God, and teaching out of the ancient creeds, founding churches, baptizing nations, and showing forth the worship of God in the beauty of holiness. The Sacraments, again, are a still higher way in which the church helps us against time; not so much by seizing upon it, hallowing it, driving the world out of it, and making it her own, as by bringing heaven forward upon earth, by fetching eternity out into time, by bringing great gifts from far and by them, in the midst of time, substantially anticipating eternity. Thus the weak element of water is sanctified by Christ's pure Flesh in "the river Jordan, to the mystical washing away of sin<sup>1</sup>," in order to cure the wound and

<sup>1</sup> Baptismal Service.

hide the scar our race has had almost since time began, even since Adam fell. Time is indeed a mystery. We cannot hear it flowing. It will make no noise, lest we should hear it and be afraid, and it should be a summon to us. Time is a wonderful and fearful thing, stealing swiftly over us and drawing us along. We cannot swim against it. We are at the bottom of the river. It is flowing above our heads and we do not feel it. We are going down with sad speed, little time to save our souls, little time to cry for help. This is our mortal life. But the Church arrests it. The Sacraments arrest it. In the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ "are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful<sup>1</sup>." They save our bodies and souls from time, and preserve both of them "unto everlasting life<sup>2</sup>." They make us one with Him, who is not subject unto time, and make Him mysteriously one with us, Who wears our nature on Him now. That Body and Blood are through faith, "by the operation of the Holy Ghost," so "wrought in the *souls* of the faithful," that "their souls live to eternal life," and

<sup>1</sup> Catechism.

<sup>2</sup> Communion Service.

their “*bodies* win a resurrection to immortality<sup>1</sup>.” Thus then, by her priestly succession, and her two chief mysteries of Baptism and the Eucharist, is the Church Catholic continually helping us against time, staying its plague, and putting limits to its wasting.

The observation of the Church Calendar, and the putting our lives under it, will continually disclose to us meanings and uses and singular fitnesses for our spiritual wants, which we should never have conceived before, and which it is scarcely possible to overvalue. It is the growth of ages, of religious ages, ages of faith and obedience, and eminent heights of sanctity. It grew together under the hands of men who lived when the Church “dwelt at large;” men “who praised the Holy One Most High with words of glory, and with their whole heart sang songs; who set singers before the altar, and beautified their feasts, and set in order the solemn times until the end, that they might praise His holy name, and that the temple might sound from morning.” It contains the old wisdom of western Christendom. It keeps somewhat of the spirit of her magnificent ritual.

<sup>1</sup> Homily on the right receiving of the Lord’s Supper.

It both embodies and imparts the catholic temper. Its being a help to us against time, and the world which is the dwelling-place of time, is only one of its offices; but it is an important one. Its alternations of vigil, fast, abstinence, and feast; its ordering of days, and seasons, and commemorations, take from time the power, alluded to before, of blunting our affections and making our feelings dull. The Birth, the Resurrection, or the Ascension of the Lord might indeed be, as they ought to be, familiar to us; but, if we celebrated them equally at all times, or specially at such times only as accident or the wayward movements of our own thoughts brought them uppermost, it is too probable we should think of them coldly and dully, or occasionally with too much excitement. The calm, stirring way in which they are brought round by the Church calendar, after due intervals and ritual preparations, affects us very differently, and much more deeply. Holy seasons are then like so many low, invisible, but strong pulsations upon the spirit, re-awakening, prolonging, and carrying forward the distinct note of joy and sorrow proper to each, without hurry, without

intermingling of sounds, making the heart as it were the dwelling-place of a perpetual echo from voices sounding in heaven : “ There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification <sup>1</sup>. ”

Besides which, the modest, dutiful observance of the Church calendar has more to do with the soundness and harmony of our belief than would at first sight appear. Many a doctrine and holy truth has too much faded out of men’s minds from neglecting the seasons when the Church calls us to meditate upon them, and praise God for them. Many a doctrine, where it has not faded in the mind, has lost its proper place, and been disadjusted, from the same neglect ; and so a wrong been done to the uncorrupt creed of the Church. The Christian Sunday has with many lost its free, joyous, evangelical character, and passed into the dull, solemnity of the Jewish Sabbath, because humiliation and deep sorrow for sin must come some time, and they have forgotten that the Church has appointed Friday for it. Thus men, in trying to be over-spiritual, have come to Judaize. The

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 10.

doctrine of angels and communion with the dead, the awfulness of the priestly office, and the like, are not in that place, in many minds, where they would be, if they observed, as it is really binding upon their consciences to do, St. Michael's and all Saints' Day, and the fasts of the Four Holy Seasons. The joy of Easter, and the doctrines connected therewith, would be both raised and deepened in us, did that queen of festivals come to all of us really, and not in almanacs only, at the end of the purifying days of Lent. But it is enough to point this out. To be catholic in faith, we must be ritual catholics : there is no other way.

THE END.

# THE CHURCH-CATECHISM

A

## MODEL

OF

## CHURCH EDUCATION.

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BY THE REV.

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“ For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I have asked of Him: therefore also I have lent him to the Lord: as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord.”—1 SAM. i. 27, 28.

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IT is well to mark, where we are able, the differences between the Church of God and the institutions of man. These grow up out of particular circumstances. They are adapted to those circumstances. They live in them. They die with them, or become useless ; and when useless, they are and must be mischievous. They have their day : and must give place to others called forth by new wants and fresh emergencies. But it is far otherwise with the Church of Christ. She is gifted with a power of fitting herself to all changes which may come in her way, and meeting every difficulty which can arise. This pliability is one of her most marvellous gifts. It is not condescension to the prejudices or humours of an age : but rather a healing of its evil tendencies. Much less is it change. Every thing changes but the

Church ; and it is because she cannot change that she has such power over all things else. She is like a cloud in the sky, taking readily every shape which the winds may imprint upon it, yet still remaining the same. Every age is possessed by some evil spirit ; and carried away by some false notions. It is here the Church steps forward, bringing forth out of her treasures just that portion of Catholic truth which is most fitted to meet the wants of the times. This pliability arises partly because the Church is no human system, but alive with the Spirit, Who abides within her ; and partly because all truth belongs to her, is embraced within her pale, and freely imparted by her. This is one great meaning of the word CATHOLIC,—*pliability without change* : an adaptation to man's heart, to his best and most natural affections, and yearnings, and faculties, and aspirations, without any regard to time, or place, or climate, or civilization, or political form of government, or any other of the temporal circumstances in and among which mankind are set down. The Church is entirely occupied with what is infinite, cherishing every thing, however humble, which points heavenward, and giving their only value to things temporal by linking them with and working them up into things eternal.

Now, of course, there are many ways in which the Church is called upon to interfere with the tendencies of an age. Let us say a few words on one most dangerous tendency of our own age which it now falls to the Church to thwart. There is a notion very prevalent among us of a vast and extended benevolence, which is something widely different from evangelical charity : a tendency to neglect the humbler ties and circles which come more closely to us, in order, so we deceive ourselves, to attain a more diffusive and imaginary good. In Scripture language, we are apt to neglect what comes to our hands to do ; and choose to do good in our own way, and after our own wisdom, and not as God's Providence keeps bringing it before us in our appointed place. Now our nature is such that affections which have not at first been disciplined in a narrow sphere, are not able to occupy a large one with any thing like efficiency. The broader the limits are which we may assign to our feelings, the more languid, and intermittent, and short-lived is their play. States are held together by the lesser duties of society being religiously fulfilled. A man's family, friends, parish, neighbourhood, county, or diocese, are all to be preferred to the larger and higher connections which he may have

as a citizen. They need not hinder him from extending his care or his benevolence to the wider circles, but they must come first in order of time. However, many think this a narrow and low view to take. It certainly is a humbler and lowlier one. Perhaps on that very account the more true. At all events it is the more practical, and founded upon our nature, which does not seem in general fitted to do great things, except through little ones. Now the spirit of our Church and her services goes quite counter to the tendency of the present age in this respect. She endeavours to make men realize as much as possible all those private loves and household endearments which are the first natural elements of human society. She takes to herself almost every common action of our lives, and makes it her own by giving it a religious turn, a church-meaning. She keeps meddling with us in every stage of our lives. She comes among us in our Baptism, Education, Confirmation, Marriage, Sickness, and Death. She calls upon us to consecrate our worldly goods by yielding a portion up to her. She bids us make our time minister to eternity by calling us away from a worldly use of it on her Sundays and Saints' days. She makes us put a limit even upon our natural appetites,

that she may teach us through her Fasts obedience and self-denial, and bountiful giving of alms. Thus she strives to interweave herself with our most secret and common thoughts, our every day actions, our domestic griefs and joys. She would put something spiritual into them all. She is diligent, unwearying, ungrudging as her Master, always going about doing good. This will be plain to us, and the blessing of it more clearly perceived, and more readily acknowledged if we examine her services with this view. For example ; let us look for awhile upon the *Catechism as putting before Church-parents a model of Church education.*

Many persons, when the meaning and depth of the Prayer-Book is unfolded to them, are apt to think there is much ingenuity and imagination in what they hear, but little truth. They think so because they are ignorant of the history of our Liturgy. They imagine it was made by one particular set of men at one particular time, and that too a time not the best fitted for the composition of devotional Formularies. This was far from being the case. The people of a nation never could have received and grafted in upon themselves a new Liturgy. It would have been nothing short of a miracle if they had. The

Prayer-Book is a very old book. It grew up out of the religious wants of many generations. It was put together by time, and, as it were, naturally ; not by men. Like every thing else in our Church, it is not new, but it has got its ancient form, though not fully, yet in a measure given back to it again. The few additions which there are grew up, like its older parts, out of spiritual wants. As the Church is, so are her Forms and Ceremonies ; pliable without changing. By being pliable I do not mean that she bends about in any way that men would have her; but that her nature is to fill up every place that is left unoccupied, to insinuate a new meaning and new spirit into all we do. Only the Church is very reserved. She has within her what will satisfy all changes of life and all vicissitudes of feeling. But she will not put it forward except to the right-minded. Her pliability is not in any alteration of herself, but in her fitting every age, every country, and every man, with equal propriety : which nothing but the Church can do ; except the air we breathe, the atmosphere wherein we live, which is itself a type of the Spirit, Who is in the Church. However the question with humble minds is rather, what can we make of the treasures we possess ? Time and circumstances only help to show us the

richness of truth. It serves many ends and meets many wants which we should never have imagined came within its original commission. This is a weighty argument against all change.

Now the peculiarity of the Prayer-Book at present before us is this—that its Services hang one upon another like a chain, and are intended to run alongside of us the whole of our lives, and that there is a danger of our losing our way the moment we let go our hold of this heavenly chain. Men think the Church did not intend this to the degree many of us suppose. This is not a matter of much moment. Enough is left to shew it was her intention in the main : and above all in the Catechism and the Formularies connected with it. The Baptismal Service ends with the mention of Confirmation ; and the knowledge of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the further instruction of the Church Catechism, as the needful preparation for that Confirmation. Thus the one Service hands us over, as it were, to the other Service ; and more than this, what we are to be doing meanwhile is clearly pointed out. The Church Catechism is to be the employment of our years from the first ability to learn and understand till the day we take upon ourselves our

Baptismal Vow, and are established and confirmed therein by the Bishop's hands. So the Order of Confirmation, mindful of the Baptismal Service, opens with a repetition of what "the Church hath thought good to order," that is, the injunction with which the Baptismal Service ended about the child's instruction. And, still looking back to Baptism as Baptism looked forward to it, the Bishop begins his prayer, "Almighty and everlasting God, who has vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants by Water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins"—a tolerably clear intimation of the Church's opinion upon Baptismal Regeneration. In like manner, the Order of Confirmation, when it is finished, hands us on in its concluding Rubric to the Order of the Holy Communion. Between Baptism and Confirmation intervenes the Catechism, the very title of which sufficiently explains its meaning;—"An instruction to be learned of every person, before he be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop." It is this Catechism which we are now to explain as a model of Church education.

It consists of five parts. A distinct statement of the Baptismal Vow, and what great things that Sacrament effects for us and within us—the

Apostles' Creed, with the questions arising out of it—the Ten Commandments, with similar questions—the Lord's Prayer, with an answer explaining it—and, lastly, the doctrine of the Holy Sacraments of Christ's Church.

1. We have first, then, *a distinct statement of the Baptismal Vow, and what great things that Sacrament effects for us and within us.* Thus one entire division of the Catechism is taken up by Holy Baptism : and, if we look more nearly into it, we shall be struck to find that its influence pervades the whole. The second division, the Creed, is only that form of sound words into which we were baptized. The third and fourth parts, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer, are two of the things enjoined to be learnt by the Baptismal Service ; and of the fifth part, the doctrine of the Sacraments, of course Baptism, occupies one half. Thus you see the whole Formulary is penetrated by the memory of Baptism. It is the life, the meaning, the unity, the religion of the whole : though faith and practice, Creed, Precept, Prayer, and theological Definitions be included therein. A great region may consist of mountains, moors, woodlands, mighty towns and cultivated fields : and yet have a unity, often be called by a single name, because of the

one river which winds over its plains and within its valleys to bless them and do them good. So is the memory of Baptism in a Churchman's education. Its waters appear everywhere: and green things, the graces of the Spirit and the fruits of the Cross, blossom and ripen on its banks. It is the sacred stream Ezekiel saw in his Vision of the Holy Waters (xlvii. 8, 9.). “These waters issue towards the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither; for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh.”

Thus we gain one great principle in Christian education. It is all made to depend upon Baptism. It is the education of a baptized soul. Now it is not too much to say that there are very few of us who give this prominence to Baptism in the education of our children. The little ones tell us that they *were* made in their Baptism “members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven;” and more-

over they “ heartily thank God their heavenly Father, that He *hath* called them to this state of salvation.” Yet we educate them as if we did not believe a word of all this. Alas ! many among us do not believe it. We bring them up as if they were one day to be Christians, not as if they were so already ; as much as we ourselves are. A jewel of great price, even the Cross of Christ, has been given into their charge : a jewel which there is a fearful chance of our losing from the evil, the inherited evil, of our nature ; a jewel which, when once lost, is well nigh irretrievable. Yet we do not tell them of all this. They grow up : and in many cases they know nothing about Baptism, neither what it is, nor that they have received it, till the near approach of Confirmation obliges us to give them views and notions of some sort or other about it. The Church, when she educates her children in the Catechism, is ever teaching them to look back. We, on the contrary, are always making them look forward. She gives them great thoughts, and tries to make them careful, jealous, and obedient, because they *are* Christians. We educate their minds and inform them with high principles of action, because they *may* be Christians and *ought* to be Christians. In a word,

with the Church Baptism is a gift and a power : with us it is a theory and a notion. If, then, what is called religious education keeps failing and turning out ill on all sides of us, it might not be amiss if we return to the guidance of our Church in this matter. Her rule ought at least to have the benefit of a trial. The primitive Christians seem in the main to have been far holier men than ourselves : and one very striking difference between us and them is their frequent reference to their Baptism. The Church is the prodigal's home. Christ may be there, waiting to bless, while we have sought Him sorrowing among the waysides leading from Jerusalem.

2. The second division of the Catechism is *the Apostles' Creed, with the question arising out of it.* This was our Baptismal Faith, the good confession which we witnessed at the Font. Here, again, we perceive some slight difference in the Church's method of education and our own. Faith comes before precept, the Apostles' Creed before the Ten Commandments. Not that knowledge and obedience can ever be, strictly speaking, distinct. Obedience springs out of knowledge ; and knowledge comes by obedience. But we are backward in believing that little children can understand such things, as are contained in

the Creed, or that it will do them any good to be taught them. In fact there is nothing in which the duty of walking by faith and not by sight is more required of us than in the education of children. Yet if we will only look carefully into ourselves we shall find that much of our most valuable knowledge, many of our most precious habits, were acquired in early childhood. Memory goes back as far as she can. But even she often stops short of the very early days during which these things were effected in us. Even lessons got off by rote, and which children cannot understand, are most useful. They lie ready in the mind. They are beforehand with falsehood and sin. The child's heart is preoccupied. No sooner does the poison begin to work, than the plant, which is to sweeten the waters, is ready, planted long since, before we knew what service God might find for it in His temple, the body of the little child. Yet we are apt to think that doctrinal knowledge is, to a child, but a bare and profitless catalogue of facts. So we try rather to store their minds with feelings. We teach them the narrative parts of Holy Scripture, the history of Abraham and Joseph, the Passion of the Son of God. This, doubtless, we ought to do, but not to leave the other undone. But we

will do nothing unless we can see some fruit come of it visibly. This is want of faith. Nevertheless, if we look attentively at what happens when children leave the parental roof for a more extended sphere of education, we may see some fruits of neglecting the rule of the Church in this matter. When boys go to great schools, or enter upon a College life, or the several professions to which they are destined, how often do they fall victims to the doubts, and cavils, and objections, which the wicked ingenuity of their clever companions has suggested ! How often, to the distress of their friends and their own great peril, do they become ensnared in the toils of some wrongheaded religionist, not unfrequently deserting the Church wherein they were baptized ! The plants the mother planted—how often, how sadly often have they closed their flowers and died, because there was no soil deep enough for their increasing roots ! And is not all this, in many cases, because we have not given them doctrinal knowledge ? Religion is to be learnt as all things else are. It follows general rules. If the child must learn grammar that the man may be a scholar, he must also learn articles of faith that he may be an orthodox Christian ; and learn them too as he learnt grammar, by memory. We

are bound to this by the Baptismal Service. We are bound to teach him "all things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health," "remembering always that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession." We believe children capable of understanding that there is a right and a wrong in matters of practice. Why are they less capable of understanding that there is a right and a wrong in matters of faith also? Orthodox children would make orthodox men. And one among other advantages, which would in all probability result to the Church from our following her example in this, would be a greater and a happier uniformity of religious opinion in the country, than there ever can be while children are not taught to be Churchmen as well as Christians, but are left to pick up a religious belief as best they may, when they attain to riper years. A boat, that has slipped her moorings and has no compass on board, must be drawn by a miracle if ever it is to reach the harbour.

3. We come next to the *Ten Commandments*, with the *Duty to God and our neighbour drawn out of them*. This also is one of the things which children were to learn, according to the Baptismal Service. It is not necessary to say much on this point. Only it were well for many reasons that

we made the Ten Commandments the basis of our moral instructions more than we do. Partly because the Church has put them before us, and obedience always brings a blessing along with it : and partly because the Ten Commandments seem in themselves to form the fittest manual for the purposes of education. Many persons have wondered at the prominent place given in the Prayer-Book to what they consider merely part of the Jewish Law. For independent of the stress laid upon the Commandments in the Baptismal Service, the Catechism and the Order of Confirmation, they are repeated every Sunday from the Altar in the Communion Service. It is quite clear the Church must have done this with fore-thought and intention. Therefore by adhering to her rule we may derive some benefit above and beyond what we expected. Then in themselves the Commandments are the fittest manual for the young. They are simple and easily remembered. The child gains a few great general principles, received with all the fear which the sanction of God confers : and round these general principles particular cases gather very speedily, and an entire code of morals is acquired before the child can understand or appreciate the value of its acquisition. Besides which the Fifth Com-

mandment, which more especially concerns children, comes to them distinguished by a promise : and the Third, which relates to a sin fearfully common among the young, receives a dreadful sanctity from the threat appended to it. When a child has to learn the distinction between right and wrong merely by experience, and by being told that this or that particular thing is wrong or right, the process is almost endless. But, if there is some brief collection of rules, and that, as it ought to be, from inspiration, a reference to them becomes as easy and natural as their authority is clear and undoubted. The labour of the teacher is lightened. The conscience of the child is aided in unfolding itself.

4. The fourth division of the Catechism is, *the Lord's Prayer, and the Answer explaining it at length.* This part of the Catechism is distinguished from the rest by having a charge prefixed to it, warning the child of his inability to "do these things of himself, or to walk in the Commandments of God without His special grace :" and of the necessity of prayer in order to attain that grace. Here again reference is made to Holy Baptism. The Lord's Prayer was one of those things which were particularly enjoined upon the child. And more than this, in the

primitive Church none but the faithful or baptized were allowed to use this Prayer. The right to call God our Father was supposed to be one of the gifts received at our Baptism.

Parents not unfrequently put a question to Clergymen connected with this subject: a question very difficult to answer, but on which it may be well to say something. "How early should a child be taught to pray, or be taken to Church? Is it right that a child should be made to address God, when it does not know the meaning of its words, or scarcely of the action it is doing?" It is of course impossible to lay down any general rules which shall hold universally. The differences in children are almost infinite. Persons therefore must be left to their own judgment in the matter. Still much may be said which may considerably aid parents in coming to their decision, if they only regard thoughtfully, not modern theories of rational education, but the will of Christ as carried out by the Church. A child's not understanding his prayers seems no objection to his being taught to pray. "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." How can they better come than in prayer? Again, when the little children had caught the cry of the people and sang Hosannas in the Temple,

Christ taught us from the Old Scriptures that “out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God had perfected praise.” And here we must observe, that it is because their *strength* is perfect that their *praise* is perfect too. Otherwise the Psalm and the New Testament would not agree. Much religious dignity too is conferred upon children in the Gospel by that saying of our Saviour, “Their Angels do always behold the face of their Father Which is in heaven.” When the Word of the Lord was scarce in the land and His visions very precious, it came to little Samuel sleeping on his bed. He did not know the meaning of it. He thought it was the voice of Eli. And indeed, if children are fit recipients of that “better thing reserved for us,” the high gift of the Sacrament of Regeneration, and God “favourably alloweth this charitable work of ours in bringing infants to His Holy Baptism,” we may fairly suppose the prayer and praise of little hearts and infant lips will be as a sweet smelling savour before Him.” In like manner the will of the Church in this, as in all other things, follows that of her Master and carries it out. This is her most sufficient warrant for Infant Baptism. The Church indeed does not specify any particular age at which a child’s religious education is to begin: but she points

out her wish most plainly when she bids us teach the Child "so soon as he shall be able to learn" the meaning and solemnity of his vow, with which in consequence the Catechism begins. Moreover we cannot tell what spiritual work God may be carrying on in the heart of the youngest child. There are strange instances on record of what men call religious precocity. Most of us may have witnessed some. This should make us respect our children more than we are apt to do. Perchance they can often understand things we think too hard for them: and, if they cannot, they may derive good from learning them, and they can derive no harm. In most cases Satan begins before we do: and infants have a sad aptitude at learning sin. The good George Herbert, whom every Churchman regards almost with an affectionate familiarity, extends this even to the reception of the Eucharist. "The time of every one's first receiving is not so much by years, as by understanding: particularly the rule may be this: when any one can *distinguish the sacramental from common bread*, knowing the institution and the difference, he ought to receive, of what age soever. Children and youths are usually deferred too long, *under pretence of devotion to the Sacrament*: but it is for want of in-

struction ; their understandings being ripe enough for ill things, and why not then for better ?”

The same principles will apply to a child’s being taken to Church. Of course when they are so young as to disturb the congregation, or are taken there so often as to connect Church with the idea of pain and weariness, the matter is carried too far. But the error is oftener on the other side. It is true we cannot exactly see *how* a child will derive good from it. We know nothing of the mysterious powers that are bound up in a child’s heart. People, who are for having everything plain and easy, that is in other words, emptied of every high spiritual meaning which is above their dulness and their grossness, are apt to look upon such language as poetry and rhetoric. But they would do well to ponder what is said in the Bible of the *child* Abijah, the little son of Jeroboam. “ Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house : and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him ; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, *because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel* in the house of Jeroboam.” However we see as a general rule that children brought up in a Church way receive impressions

which often remain unfaded through an idle boyhood and a reckless youth, and are God's angels to bring the wanderer home at last. There are many Christians whose lives are like an autumn day. In the beginning it is all mist and fog, doubt and peril, but the sun struggles through at mid-day ; and, though the hours that remain be few, it shines as brightly and as hotly as in summer. Yet very often, as in autumn, it has an early setting, as if the sins of youth might be forgiven and yet not left unvisited. Now in most of these cases we should probably find that the very early instructions of a mother had been the means of the prodigal's return. Yet we are not left altogether in the dark as to the way in which a child's mind is affected by being early taken to Church. It is compelled to be silent far longer than at any other time, to remain in a similar posture, to look upon a scene the meaning of which it does not understand. All things round it, the faces of its parents, the dress of the clergy, the demeanour of the congregation, the unusual shape and ornaments of the building, have an air of solemn earnestness to which it is not accustomed. Its soul is taken by surprise. The avenues of its heart are open to many new and stirring emotions. It feels that something of a

fearful nature is going on about it. It is impressed with the religiousness of the Church Service. Thus the feeling of reverence, of sacred fear, is growing up in its mind : a feeling which can never be acquired in after life, and which is the best preservative against rude familiarity and empty levity in holy things. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom ; and this beginning, this foundation-stone of true religion, is laid well and deeply, far down in a child's heart below the world's reach, during its early attendance upon the Service of the Church.

5. The Catechism ends with the *doctrine of the Sacraments of Christ's Church*. As it began with one Sacrament, nothing now remains but that it should hand us over to the other. It has all along been looking backward and forward at once. Baptism has been to it as a memory : and its hope has been in the prospect of the Lord's Supper. This is a very serious lesson to us, if we are teachable sons of the Church. We see the immense importance of the Blessed Sacraments in her estimation. She gives them a most prominent position in all her Formularies ; even in her manual of instruction. And we know well how completely a man's religious views depend upon the estimation in which he holds the Sacra-

ments. If then we acted upon Church principles with our children, we should draw all our sanctions and our terrors from their Baptismal Vow. We should make it the standard and the test of all they did. We should make the Lord's Supper to them what Heaven is to all of us ; a prize, and a reward, and a glory to which they may look forward : something far beyond and infinitely above the means of grace which are at present open to them. Their being obliged to leave Church while their parents stay for the Holy Communion, the great festivals being marked in some way or other so as to impress them on their memories, and their seeing that such days are very honourably distinguished by the celebration of the Eucharist, are all so many ways which Church parents might make use of to give a more sacramental character to their children's education. It may be greatness of mind, strength of reason, and so forth, to be above religious prejudices. But, blessed be God ! there are few men who can ever disentangle themselves from their childish associations with the parish Church and home Sundays. They cling to their memories, and linger there, like the perpetual ringing of Church-bells, going on when the bells themselves have long since been silenced. A child

has generally a keener and stronger perception of mystery than a man. This would make the Sacraments still more powerful instruments in education. For children are by nature curious and inquisitive; and the knowledge that the Sacraments are at once put out of the reach of their understanding, that their full meaning cannot be explained to them, and that age will not give them much new light about them, would invest those reverend ordinances with a dignity and an interest which would at once attract and overawe a child. To him, wholly ignorant of irreverent definitions, and controversies no less irreverent, the blessed Sacraments would be purely heavenly things; just as they are in themselves; gifts in which the Son of God gives Himself with power unto the Church. Thus might the Sun of Righteousness be the centre of their religion. Children so brought up would never in after life make wayward impulses and mixed feelings, sentiments, opinions, experiences and the like, the tests of their spiritual state. They would look to nothing within themselves; but to Christ without, in His Church and in His Sacraments. Their lives would be like an evening sky. The holy Sacraments would set forth the sun which is the golden heart of all the

scene ; and their duties, their actions, and opinions, like the flocks of little clouds, would catch light and colour and beauty from the centre, fuller or fainter according to their distance.

Certainly this is not the sort of education popular at the present day. With us knowledge is made the great moving instrument. We are afraid of a child's natural faith and natural prejudices. We strive to correct the one and to destroy the other. The Church on the other hand knows that faith is a plant from another land, and must have nourishment from its home. She knows that there lies within it that seed, which is the victory that overcometh the world ; and she would have it grow and increase till it fills the whole heart ; like the bough of Joseph, the fruitful bough by a well, even the well of Baptism, whose branches run over the wall. But thus it is that one error in religion brings in seven others worse than itself. When once men could bring themselves to believe that baptized children would have to be converted after they grew up, it was natural to look upon any system of education founded upon the Sacraments as improper and absurd. But if we would only return to taste of our mother's wisdom, if we only had the courage to trust ourselves with God, if

we would make the Sacraments to be in our children's education what mere knowledge has too often been, if we would cease to interfere with Heaven as it unfolds itself in a child's heart, then would our children be taught of God, and great would be the peace of our children : greater far than that of their fathers has been, for they would dwell in a city at unity with itself.

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### A PRAYER,

TO BE USED BY PARENTS AND TEACHERS.

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*Out of the Order of Confirmation.*

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, Who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants by Water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins ; strengthen them, we beseech Thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them Thy manifold gifts of grace ; the spirit of wisdom and

understanding ; the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength ; the spirit of knowledge and true godliness ; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of Thy holy fear, now and for ever. *Amen.*

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FOR OBEDIENCE AND UNITY.

---

BY THE REV.

FREDERIC W. FABER, B.A.

FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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I will keep Thy ceremonies : O forsake me not utterly.—Ps. cxix. 8.

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## CONFIRMATION

A WITNESS FOR OBEDIENCE AND UNITY.

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WHEN the providence of God was pleased to interpose among the judgments and miseries which came upon England, after the martyrdom of King Charles, of blessed memory, and the plague of rebellion and civil strife was stayed for a while, the Church was left in a distracted and unsettled condition. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the evils under which she laboured. Men's minds were loosened from every principle of allegiance and obedience to authority as a divine ordinance. All true and Christian notions of political and religious liberty were lost sight of. Faith had given way to mere opinion : the creed of the Church to the novel doctrines of schismatical teachers. Antiquity was regarded with suspicion, as the representative to the popular mind of an old and oppressive state of things. During the troubles, the nation had become almost infinitely divided and broken up into sects and factions, among which many of the old heresies had revived, and new extravagancies, no less heretical, were spread abroad. At

such a season, it seemed almost mockery to talk of a rule of faith and a Church with full authority from God to divide the Word of Truth. She might have complained with Ezekiel, “ Ah Lord God ! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables ? ” Now it was just at this crisis, that Bishop Taylor, one of the great lights which God set to shine in His Church during her affliction, called the attention of the country to the holy and ancient rite of Confirmation. It was not merely accidental, that he selected that particular time for such a subject. He was a Bishop of the Irish Church, and he addressed his treatise to the good duke of Ormonde, the king’s representative in that land, very solemnly, and with an express declaration, that Confirmation was the pearl which the Church was now called upon to bring out of her treasures, in order to meet the wants and evils of those days. The primitive unction of Confirmation was the oil which was to be poured upon the uneasy waters, as though it were gifted with a heavenly power to quiet and allay the anger and tossing of the storm.

Now, it may very easily be, that one period of a nation’s history may outwardly, and in its great historical features, be very unlike another period ; and yet, all the while, be in reality very similar. Opposite things may have brought about the same results. Indifference may affect a Church

just as violence would affect it; only it would be longer in doing its work. The want of an even and uniform activity or warmth or discipline, on the one side, and, on the other, occasional, partial, irregular, and not always obedient endeavours after a right state of things, may divide a Church, may loosen its bands, and make it feeble, just as effectually as wrong and robbery and violence. In the one case, the end is brought about by the sacrilege of her enemies, in the other, by the undutiful coldness of her sons. It may be well, therefore, to consider whether the evils, which, in Bishop Taylor's day, Confirmation was to remedy, do not exist in a measure now. If they do, a right view of Confirmation may afford us the help which he expected to derive from it then. It is true, that in his time the regular administration of this rite had been sadly interrupted; whereas, in our days, it is performed with all decent solemnity in every diocese throughout the land. But religious truths, as well rites as doctrines, have many meanings and many gifts, which they keep unfolding as they are wanted in the Church. She never shifts her ground in combating the world; but she is perpetually varying her attitude. And, as she turns, the sun falls here and there upon the precious stones, that are set so thickly in her priestly dress, and causes them to give a diffe-

rent colour, and to be seen under new aspects, while the depth and strength of their colours is, to our eyes, altering continually. Thus, the importance of particular portions of her Creed and Ritual keeps rising and falling, according as her warfare assumes a new character.

One striking feature of the Church, in those days, was the want of obedience to spiritual pastors and teachers. The same evil is apparent now. It is as actively pernicious as it was then. The “people are as they that strive with the priest.” (Hos. iv. 4.) Now Confirmation was looked upon by Bishop Taylor as a means of “greatly endearing the episcopal *order*, to which (that I may use St. Jerome’s words) if there be not attributed a more than common power and authority, there will be as many schisms as priests :” and secondly, “as a means of endearing the *persons* of the prelates to their flocks, when the people shall be convinced that there is, or may be, if they please, a perpetual intercourse of blessings and love between them; when God by their holy hands refuses not to give to the people the earnest of an eternal inheritance, when by them He blesses : and that the grace of our Lord Jesus and the love of God, and the communication of His Spirit, is conveyed to all persons capable of the grace, by the conduct, and on the hands and prayers

of their Bishops." So high and so intense was the faith of this man of God, that he did not hesitate to believe, that these great marvels might be wrought by one plain Catholic rite ; albeit he saw around him a scene as dismal and dreary, as could well meet the eyes of a Christian Bishop : " Churches demolished, much of the revenues irrecoverably swallowed by sacrilege, and digested by an unavoidable impunity ; religion infinitely divided, and parted into formidable sects ; the people extremely ignorant, and wilful by inheritance ; superstitiously irreligious, and incapable of reproof." So firm was his belief in the powers and graces of the Church of Christ, and so mighty in operation did he think the least of her ceremonies, as carrying the blessing of God along with it, and the very presence of the Spirit, Who is with the Church to comfort her !

To these two blessings, which Bishop Taylor looked for in Confirmation, we may add two others, rising out of the former, and forced upon our notice by the wants of the times. The existence of different schools of religious opinion is, of course, a great evil. The truth can only be partially in any one of them. At least, it is unlikely it should exist entire anywhere short of the Church Catholic. Thus unity, as well of feeling as of acting, is grievously interfered with. It

becomes nothing beyond a mere word, a phrase, full of history, but without any reality at present answering to it. Now Confirmation, by God's blessing, gives us a Catholic way, not of our own devising, of restoring unity. In some measure, it may be considered as embodying the principle of unity. It brings every son and daughter of the Church in immediate contact with their Bishop, who is the type and symbol of Church unity, and the very representative of Christ. It refers to him as the proper fountain of all ministerial power, just as the ministers at Baptism admonish the sponsors that the child must be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop, as though their ministration were imperfect without him.

Secondly, as the rite of Confirmation is, amongst us, practised only in the Catholic Church, it multiplies the signs and badges which distinguish her from the Protestant sectarian bodies. This is of immense importance in these days. The lines that run between the Church and the world have grown, in many places, so faint, that they can scarcely be distinguished. If the visible character of the Church, as a positive institution, were more drawn out, if her peculiarities were more deeply worn into her, so that the marks of the Lord Jesus which she bears in her body could be easily recognized, she would be enabled to keep her sons more closely to her side; and, from her beauty and

her grandeur, would be more likely to allure the wayward back into the fold. People want to see and to feel that there is a substantial difference between the Church of God and the motley multitude who follow her. It should be made to meet them at every turn. It is a judgment on us, that we have so far lost our first faith, as to require so much proof and so much convincing. But it is a mercy that we have that left amongst us, which can satisfy our needs, and witness against ourselves.

Let us consider Confirmation then, mainly in this point of view: its fitness for us just now, its ability to give us what we want; being, as it is, a primitive and legitimate channel, by which we may receive those blessings which a zealous but faithless generation might otherwise strive to attain, by means and ways which have not the blessing of God, and the sanction of His Church upon them. Catholic rites only become forms, when men have ceased to believe there is anything divine about them. They only become merely external, when men have killed their internal power by disbelieving that it is there. If we only dared to have faith, and of course it requires courage, the Church would be all activity and spirit; her very ceremonies would be alive and full of gifts, and sharper than any two-edged sword.

There are four points to be considered; the origin and antiquity of Confirmation, its connection with holy Baptism, the blessing which it conveys, and the ministers by whose hands that blessing is conveyed<sup>1</sup>.

*1. The origin and antiquity of Confirmation.* The Fathers of the Church were accustomed to look on the descent of the Holy Ghost upon our Lord at His baptism, to be the type of Confirmation. His custom also of blessing little children by the imposition of Hands, was regarded by the early Christians as a warrant for this rite. But the main passages of Holy Scripture upon which they rested, were the account of the Samaritan converts, in the Acts of the Apostles, whom St. Philip the Deacon had baptized, but who were confirmed by St Peter and St. John; and the passage in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where St. Paul enumerates “the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands” among the foundations and principles of the doctrine of Christ. Confirmation was at the very least of apostolic institution, if it was not ordained by Christ himself. It ob-

<sup>1</sup> As Confirmation is a subject on which, for many reasons, a disclaimer of originality is requisite, it is as well to say that this tract is entirely put together from Bishop Taylor's treatise on Confirmation, the xii. book of Bingham's Antiquities, Wheatly on the Common Prayer, and the second volume of Palmer's *Origines Liturgicæ*.

tained universally in every branch of the Church, a Catholic custom founded upon a Catholic tradition. St. Cyprian says, "this custom is also descended to us, that they who are baptized, might be brought by the rulers of the Church, and by our prayer and the imposition of hands may obtain the Holy Ghost, and be consummated with the signature of the Lord." Tertullian also, who was earlier still, says, "the flesh is sealed that the soul may be guarded or defended, and the body is overshadowed by the imposition of hands, that the soul may be enlightened by the Holy Ghost." Indeed, in St. Jerome's account of this rite, we might almost imagine, we saw a description of the custom of modern times. "I do not deny that this is the custom of the Church, that when persons are baptized in lesser cities by priests and deacons, the Bishop uses to travel far, that he may lay hands on them for the invocation of the Holy Spirit." Thus, then, we see this rite of Confirmation to claim for itself the example of our Saviour Christ, to be administered by the holy Apostles, and after them by their successors, the Bishops, throughout all ages of the world. This should lead us to respect it, and to make much of the Church, whose very rites derive a sacred character from their antiquity, far beyond what any political institution in the

world can claim ; rising, as this rite does, like an angel from our Saviour's feet, and coming among us with some portion of His unsearchable riches. We are too apt to forget that the treasures of the Church are often of this sort, showing us, by their origin, their antiquity, and their prevalence, which considering what they are, is nothing short of a miracle, that a Power mightier than themselves is linked with them, because of Whose presence they themselves should be revered. Each particular Church has undoubted right to decree its own ceremonies. But this does not extend to all which may be properly called ritual. There are some portions of her inheritance which she may not stir, some rites which it would be unsafe, if not unfaithful, to alter or remove on any ground ; such, in short, as are in the fullest sense Catholic, and not merely parts of the ceremonial of particular Churches and liturgies, such as are of divine and apostolic institution, not the later additions of provincial councils or holy Bishops ; such as Confirmation, for example, the covering of women in the Churches because of the angel, and the like. Otherwise would Church ceremonies be like man's fashions. There would be an endless succession, an endless changing, old things fading away, and new ones rising in their place. But it is not so with the Church, even in her

Ritual, and therefore that Ritual should be, to a thoughtful and serious mind, full of holy fearfulness and glory half-unveiled, leading men to “praise the Lord for His goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men.”

*2. Its connection with Holy Baptism.* This is a difficult and intricate question. So far, however, as the teaching of antiquity goes, it seems that Confirmation is on the one hand distinct from Baptism, but not a separate sacrament, in the sense, at least, in which we call Baptism and the Holy Communion sacraments; while, on the other hand, it has a necessary and indissoluble connection with Baptism, though it is by no means to be regarded merely as a ceremony appended to that sacrament, a part of the Ritual of Baptism. It certainly presupposes Baptism. It has no meaning without it. Still it has gifts of its own to convey, quite apart from those received at the Font. When the ancients speak of Baptism and Confirmation together, they seem to consider the one as giving innocence, the other as giving strength. Of course, innocence itself is strength, a safeguard and a power; and strength too strives to work its way into innocence. The gifts of God never lie far from each other. We cannot move one without disturbing several others. So it is in these rites,

we cannot definitely divide them, as men would have us do in controversy, any more than we can separate justification and sanctification, though they may really be separable. So we cannot altogether exclude strength from the purity of Baptism, or innocence from the might of Confirmation. Still, with this caution, we may safely teach, with the Fathers, that Baptism confers innocence, and that strength comes of Confirmation. It may be well to quote some of the authorities adduced by Bishop Taylor. They are all from old writers, "It is true, Baptism is sufficient to them that are to die presently: but it is not enough for them that are still to live and to fight against their spiritual enemies." Another says, "In Baptism, the Holy Ghost giveth us his fulness, in order to innocence, but in Confirmation He yieldeth increase unto grace." A third says, "Although to them that die presently, the benefits of regeneration are sufficient, yet to them that live, the auxiliaries of Confirmation are necessary." Lastly, a fourth writer uses the following language; "The Baptism of water profits us, because it washes away the sins we have formally committed, if we repent of them. But it does not sanctify the soul, or precede the concupiscences of the heart and our evil thoughts, nor drive them back, nor repress our carnal desires.

But he therefore who is (only) so baptized, that he does not also receive the Holy Spirit, is baptized in his body, and his sins are pardoned; but in his mind, he is yet but a catechumen, for so it is written, ‘ He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of His;’ and therefore, afterward out of his flesh will germinate worse sins, because he hath not received the Holy Spirit conserving him (in his baptismal grace), but the house of his body is empty; wherefore that wicked spirit finding it swept with the doctrines of faith, as with besoms, enters in, and in a seven-fold manner dwells there.” The language of the Church of England is very similar. In the order of Confirmation, the Bishop, in his first prayer, describes Baptism as a regeneration by water and the Holy Ghost, and a forgiveness of all sins; whereas, he prays that Confirmation may be a strengthening with the Holy Ghost the comforter, an increase of the manifold gifts of grace, such as the spirit of ghostly strength, and a filling the heart with the spirit of holy fear. In like manner, the first Prayer Book of King Edward VI. having said that Baptism is sufficient to salvation for such “as depart out of this life in their infancy,” goes on to say that, “when children come to that age, that partly by the frailty of their own flesh, partly by the assaults of the world and the devil, they begin to be in danger to fall into sundry kinds of sin,

it is most meet that Confirmation be ministered to those that be baptized, that, by imposition of hands and prayer, they may receive strength and defence against all temptations to sin, and the assaults of the world and the devil." Thus Bishop Taylor calls Baptism "a regeneration unto life," and Confirmation "a strengthening unto battle."

" So should thy champions, ere the strife,  
 By holy hands o'ershadowed kneel,  
 So, fearless for their charmed life,  
 Bear, to the end, thy Spirit's seal."

Surely, when we see Confirmation thus wedded to Holy Baptism, thus raised into high dignity in the Church of Christ, and growing up out of a sacrament, it should make us jealous of the gift we received therein. It should make us diligent in teaching those beneath our care how solemn a thing it is, how easily its grace is lost amid the temptings of the world, and that it is hard to be regained. They would think more of Confirmation, if we taught them to think more of holy Baptism.

3. But the connection of Confirmation with Baptism, leads us to the third point we were to consider—*the blessing which it conveys*. If we look into Church sacraments and rites, we shall find that they contain within them a sort of covenant, an unequal and imperfect one, yet, nevertheless, a covenant; something to be

done on our part, as well as something on the part of God. Thus, faith and repentance, and especially the giving of thanks, are our oblation at the Altar, as well as the gifts of Bread and Wine; there is a vow in Ordination, and penitence must make room in our hearts for the grace of Absolution. Not that these things give their virtue to the rites. They are required as a preparation. The consecrating power is with Christ, and is imparted by the Holy Ghost through the ministers of the Church. This is the meaning of the word “spiritual” in theology. It denotes the fulness, and presence, and benediction of the Spirit of God. It is not, as some think, opposed to real; rather it is that which puts religious things far above every thing else in the way of reality. In the modern sense it refers, as we make almost all things do, to ourselves; to our way of receiving or apprehending a divine truth. In the mouths of the fathers it refers to God’s way of being in and with that truth, so as to fill it with the power and blessing of the Godhead. It means that the Holy Spirit is there with the consecrating power, He being, in the old liturgy, “the Witness of the Lord Jesus’ Passion.” Thus the spiritual presence of our Lord, in the Sacrifice of the Altar, is His real presence, Christ being made effectually there by the Holy Ghost, Who is the Comforter of the Church.

on earth, and through Whom she has access to the Father and the Son. This is one of the privileges which we have as members of the Body Mystical, as being looked at by God in and through His dear Son, that we are enabled to do anything which shall be worthy of being an offering unto the Holy Trinity. God puts it into our hearts to wish good wishes, and He gives us power to do what we wish to do, and yet when done, little as our part has been in the matter, He accepts it as our oblation, a faint and feeble shadow of the oblation on the Cross.

Now, if we look at the order of Confirmation according to the Church of England, the same thing is visible. We have a duty to do, as well as a grace to receive. We have to take upon ourselves our baptismal vow, with all solemnity in the presence of God and His congregation. This vow relates entirely to our Christian warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil ; and therefore is not absolutely essential as a condition in order to our receiving the gift of innocence in Baptism. So the Church does not deem it necessary to the Sacrament, seeing that in the private baptism of infants, wherein she would endeavour to render the service as short as possible, without, of course, omitting any one thing requisite to the Sacrament, we have only the naming of the child, the act of pouring water

with the invocation of the Trinity, and a single prayer afterwards. But Christ has, in mercy, permitted His Church to “antecede our faith” in us. And this vow it is which we are called upon in Confirmation to ratify in our own persons, as well as to make profession of our faith. Thus, Confirmation finishes and consummates our Baptism. It gives completeness to what was done at our Baptism, but was waiting and looking out for a further fulfilment. What it wanted it meets with in Confirmation. It is satisfied there. Now it is scarcely necessary to prove, that we are very much confirmed and settled in this vow, and our faith much quickened by the Bishop’s prayers, and the laying on of his hands. So here is one blessing of Confirmation. We take a vow, which we know ourselves unable to fulfil; but we do it in faith. Blessing is waiting at the door: it has come a long way to meet us. The words of our promise are scarcely uttered, before, for our faith’s sake, God gives us power to fulfil it.

Yet this is far from being all. It is not, properly speaking, *the* gift of Confirmation. We receive therein the Holy Ghost, the “signature of the Lord.” We are sealed with the Spirit of promise. Now this will require a little explanation. That it is the doctrine of the Church we shall see at once, if we read the Bishop’s prayer; and here, as in so many other places, the Church

Catholic in England is but the echo of antiquity. For it is curious to find the very words of that prayer used in an exhortation upon those words “He which establisheth us with you in Christ, is God,” in a work which goes under the name of St. Ambrose, “Remember that thou hast received the spiritual signature; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and godliness, the spirit of holy fear; and do thou keep what thou hast received. God the Father hath sealed thee, Christ the Lord hath confirmed thee.” These words may very probably be taken from an old liturgy of the time, and well known to his hearers. It would be very interesting to find that it was so; for, if it were, and the work in which it occurs were really by St. Ambrose, this prayer would be much older than it has been generally supposed. It has been called “at least as old as 494, but probably much more ancient.” At all events, a similar prayer, pronounced while the Bishop held his hands aloft over the heads of those to be confirmed, is found in every ritual over the world; and the one in our Prayer-book has been used by English Bishops for above twelve hundred years. The language of St. Gregory is nearly the same: “We therefore call it a seal or signature, as being a guard and custody to us, and a sign of the Lord’s dominion over us.” Again, another Father says, “Call to

thy remembrance the initiation in the holy mysteries, wherein the initiated, after renouncing the tyrant and confessing (Christ) the king, do receive the unction of the spiritual ointment, as it were a royal signature, perceiving by that unction, as in a shadow, the invisible grace of the Holy Ghost." It was called in old time, "the seal of the gift of the Spirit." Let us see what is said of this *seal* in Scripture: "Now He which stablisheth, or confirmeth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, Who hath also *sealed* us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Again, "In Whom, also, after that ye believed, ye were *sealed* with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory." Again: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are *sealed* unto the day of redemption." Again: "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this *seal*, The Lord knoweth them that are His." What the foundation was, we have seen out of the epistle to the Hebrews, and "the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands" were part of it: and that the Lord knoweth them that are His by the seal in their foreheads, we read both in Ezekiel and the Revelation.

This is the seal which is the gift of Confirmation. The treasures we received in our Baptism are now in danger. Hitherto, we have been

children ; careless and happy, for we were innocent. Our fountain was not sealed. Our garden was not closed. God has put us into the ark, but He has not shut us in. We have a liberty now, which we cannot have when the waters rise upon the earth, and prevail greatly. Thoughts and feelings, sights and sounds, went in and out day and night. It was a time of peace. Where danger is not looked for, there is no suspicion. But things are altered now. The world is opening upon us, and war is being proclaimed. We do not see heaven so clearly as we did. It is fading off to a distance and deserting us. It is clouding over. Our old way of living is an unsafe way of living now. The Church set up within our bodies, the temple of the Holy Ghost of which St. Paul speaks, must be fashioned in all things after the model of the Church Universal. It must have gates and barriers, inclosures, vaults, and secret places, seals and signs, whose meaning none can read but they who have the cypher in their hearts, handwritings on its walls, whose hidden warnings are, to passers by, as mysterious as the Hand that wrote them was invisible. We must have all this in our bodies, souls, and spirits, or we shall fail in the day of battle. The kingdom of heaven must be within us. It will unfold itself there against the world, till it excludes it and thrusts it forth, and fills the whole man. This it is now beginning to do. We are

henceforth to be like jealous householders. We come to distrust our own powers, our intellectual powers especially. Our enemy has many treacherous friends in that quarter of the city. Openly or covertly, the violence of a noisy anger or the stratagem of a disguised lust, are eager to rifle our treasures; and, if we are bereaved of them, we are indeed bereaved. We must have a strong man armed; and that strong man must be stronger than the world, the flesh, and the devil. His seal they cannot break. It may seem a little one and a frail one, for "weakness is aye heaven's might." But it has a mystery in it. None have power to break it but ourselves, and for us alas! nothing is more easy. So long as we do not touch it we are safe. No one else can touch it to harm it. For the strong man armed, is even the most Holy Comforter, the third Person of the blessed Trinity, and His Seal is set in Confirmation.

We cannot tell all which this Seal does for us. What we do know is that God's gifts have a depth and fulness, inexhaustible, without repentance, and to the bottom of which we can never come. It is not good to say too much on things of this sort. Only, strange as they may seem to many, it is well to carry the thoughts of Bishop Taylor with us to a reverent and silent adoration of God's mercies in this matter. He is talking

of the excellency of the Lord's Seal. He seems as if he would have said something more. But apparently he checks himself, and concludes thus : " I will not be so curious as to enter into a discourse of the philosophy of this, but I shall say, that they who are curious in the secrets of nature, and observe external signatures in stones, plants, fruits, and shells, of which naturalists make many observations and observe strange effects, and the more internal signatures in minerals and living bodies, of which chemists discourse strange secrets, may easily, if they please, consider that it is infinitely credible, that in higher essences, even in spirits, there may be signatures proportionable, wrought more immediately and to greater purposes by a Divine Hand. I only point at this, and so pass it over, as, it may be, fit for every man's consideration."

4. Lastly, we come to *the Ministers by whose hands this blessing is conveyed.* Hitherto we have been considering what Confirmation really is, and what it really does for us, in short, the theology of Confirmation. We have now to say a little of what we may make of it if we choose, namely, a witness for obedience and unity. It is needless to multiply authorities to show that this gift was only to be conveyed through the Bishops, the highest order in the Church. It will be enough to quote from a

letter of Pope Innocent the First, who lived A.D. 402, and is called by St. Augustin the “ blessed Innocent.” “ Concerning Confirmation of infants, it is clear, it is not lawful to be done by any other than by the Bishop : for the presbyters, although they be priests, yet have not the summit of episcopacy. But that these things are due to the Bishops, is shown, as well by ecclesiastical custom, as by what we read in the Acts of the Apostles, which says that Peter and John were sent to give the Holy Ghost to those already baptized.”

The Bishops are the divinely appointed fountains of all spiritual grace and spiritual power. We are to reverence them with no common reverence as the true representatives of Christ, the visible heads of the churches upon earth, as He is the head of the Church, visible and invisible whether in heaven or on earth. They are put before us as symbols of unity. They keep the Church together. It is by their office that it is not scattered and dispersed over hill and dale, like sheep that have no shepherds. The clergy see their Bishop in Ordinations and Visitations, and they, as well as the people, meet him at the Consecration of churches. They are bound, as a matter of law and discipline, to acknowledge his authority, and, in proportion to their humility, they seek from him ghostly

counsel and friendly guidance in doubt and perplexity, ready to submit in many things to which they are not obliged, as being their elder brother in the Lord. But in Confirmation he is brought home to all the people. He is their father in Christ. Many a remote parish beholds him coming among them, rich in gifts and most like his Master, going about doing good. He is the successor of those Apostles whom Pope Gregory compares to the thick clouds in which God “bindeth up the waters, and the cloud is not rent under them.” They, like clouds, “are sent forth here and there over the world, and they give rain with their words, and they send forth bright sparkles of light from their marvels.” For a Bishop never travels in his diocese, but to scatter blessings over all, and to leave the peace of God and the benediction of the Trinity behind him. He cannot move about, but some of the precious ointment from his head is left upon the spot where he trod, fragrant with the sweetness of the Cross. Thus he enables us to realize Church unity, to bring it home to ourselves, to make it a natural and practical feeling, not a mere notion to hear of or talk about. A people without a Bishop are all the same as a family without a father. So long as the father lives, his hearth is a point of union; if not continually, yet at great Church festivals, such as Christmas

and Easter, when sons and grandsons are wont to flock around their old sire, and learn all gentle lessons among the scenes of childhood, and go to their old parish church again, as if it were their Jerusalem, and receive the holy Communion all together at the same old altar, where, perchance, they knelt trembling by their mother's side, for the first time partakers of those holy mysteries. But when all this has passed away into the father's grave, then one brother is settled here and another there, with different cares and different pursuits. Each is becoming the head of a family himself, and is left to himself in the world. A churchman is never without a father so long as he has a Bishop ; and Confirmation is continually bringing this home to our very door, and endearing our spiritual father to us.

Then again, Confirmation is a witness to us of the authority of Bishops, as showing that certain great rites are reserved for them. And we may learn obedience to them from this. It is a valuable lesson to us, more valuable almost than we can imagine. We obey laws and political authorities from fear, at least in most cases. When we know that a broken law can avenge itself we avoid breaking it. Human enactments rely almost as much on the natural cowardice of man, by acting upon which they prevent crime,

as they do upon their ability to punish it when committed. Even if we try, we cannot be sure that we obey laws from love to the authority imposing them. Civil authority is a hard and dry thing to love. Yet there are feelings in the heart, high and gentle ones, which are eager to obey from love ; like new friends, impatient for some opportunity to make sacrifices for each other and show the strength of their loyalty. These feelings are of God. They have somewhat of heaven in their character. It is sad they should be shut up within ourselves. Now a spiritual authority has no power to avenge itself in this life, and what it may do hereafter is too uncertain and too far off to have much weight now. Except a Church should arm herself with tremendous secular power, as Rome did for example, she can only secure obedience out of the affection and docility of her children, and their deep persuasion that the presence of the Lord shines round about her. Moreover, the right of Bishops to be regarded as standing in the place of Christ can only be proved by much learning and difficult research. This most men cannot of course pretend to ; so, if they receive it at all, they must receive it, as in reality they receive all other truth, on trust : and, if they refuse to receive it because they have not proved it, they must by the same rule reject all other religious doctrines

which they have not proved for themselves ; and this would include almost all their faith. For instance, the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation are proveable from holy Scripture ; yet, if you put them to it, there are few who can so prove them, none who could have found them out if the Church had not showed the way ; and they must believe them, if they would be saved. Therefore, in honouring, obeying, and loving our Bishops, we are finding satisfaction for some of the most amiable feelings of our nature, tracing out the will of our Master in all His ordinances, and gradually forming within us the habit of obedience, one of the bravest as well as hardest of the Gospel virtues.

It is through the Bishop then that the gift of Confirmation is conveyed, and the Ritual of it is the laying on of hands. In patriarchal times a father's blessing used to be conveyed thereby, and even the right of inheritance to divine promises was altered and transferred by it. And fathers are a natural type of Bishops. The old patriarchs with their blessings have gone away, and Christian Bishops have come in their room. "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth." So in antiquity Tertullian talks of our "being cleansed by Baptismal Water, and disposed for the Holy Spirit, under the hand of the angel of

the Church," the title given to Bishops in the Revelation of St. John. "Is it not lawful," he goes on, "for God by an instrument of His own, under holy hands to accord the heights and sublimity of the Spirit?" The sacredness of this Ritual will be at once acknowledged by a reader of the Bible. Whether it is natural (as men speak) to us, or is a remnant of what God may have taught us at the first, we cannot pretend to know. Still so it is, that all through holy Scripture among the patriarchs of old time, the priests of the house of Aaron, our Saviour Christ himself, and his Apostles after Him, this "overshadowing of hands" was practised as a solemn rite. So Moses was to stretch forth his hand over the sea to divide it. So Christ blessed little children, and oftentimes healed the sick. So the Apostles used it in Confirmation, Ordination, and the Unction of the Sick, spoken of by St. James. But innumerable passages will occur to every one, especially the one already quoted from the Epistle to the Hebrews, where laying on of hands is part of what the Apostle calls the "foundation." Frivolous and trifling persons have thought light of this Ritual. When things are very common, we are inclined to think them not very deep. But, perhaps, such men would find it hard to say why it *was* so common in Scripture; and why they them-

selves, by a sort of natural inspiration, connect the idea of power and blessing with the act; why in courts and pageantries honour is conferred and homage paid by the hand; why in daily greetings, or reconciliations, men use their right hand, as a ritual, whereby to confer in a type the inward feelings of kindness and forgiveness. There is nothing in the nature of things why all this should be so; yet it is so. Let not men, therefore, ridicule the external rite, lest, perchance, in their worldly wisdom and cleverness, they grieve Him Who may have linked His inward grace thereto. All men fear where God is: let them at least be silent where He *may* be. We may conclude as we began, with Bishop Taylor: “It is easy for profane persons to deride these things, as they do all religion which is not conveyed to them by sense or natural demonstrations; but the economy of the Spirit and ‘the things of God are spiritually discerned.’ ‘The Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and no man knows whence it comes, and whither it goes,’ and the operations are discerned by faith, and received by love and by obedience. ‘Give me a Christian, and he will understand what I say.’ But of this we are sure, that in all the times of Moses’ law, while the synagogue was standing, and in all the days of Christianity, so long as men loved religion, and walked in the spirit, and minded the affairs of

their souls, to have the prayers and the blessings of the fathers of the synagogue and the fathers of the Church, was esteemed no small part of their religion, and so they went to heaven."

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### A PRAYER,

TO BE USED BY ALL MEN FOR THEIR BISHOPS.

*(Out of the Order of Consecrating Bishops.)*

Most merciful Father, we beseech Thee to send down upon this Thy servant Thy heavenly blessing; and so endue him with Thy holy Spirit, that he, preaching Thy word, may not only be earnest to reprove, beseech, and rebuke with all patience and doctrine; but also may be to such as believe a wholesome example, in word, in conversation, in love, in faith, in chastity, and in purity; that, faithfully fulfilling his course, at the latter day he may receive the crown of righteousness laid up by the Lord the righteous Judge, Who liveth and reigneth one God with the Father and the Holy Ghost, world without end. AMEN.

THE END.

THE  
BURIAL SERVICE,

ITS

DOCTRINE AND CONSOLATIONS.

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BY THE REV.

FREDERICK W. FABER, M.A.  
FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.—*1 COR. xv. 53.*

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ON THE  
BURIAL SERVICE.

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A CHRISTIAN congregation would be a strange and affecting sight, if the private histories of those several persons who compose it, were by any means disclosed to us. It would at all events fill us rather with images of sadness, than with thoughts of joy. For, to put out of view awhile all the other innumerable evils of life, where can the household be found in which death has not had his work to do? Most of my readers, young and middle-aged and old, have met around the open grave. You have seen that little silent congregation that is there assembled round the rows of fresh earth: and did ever any one witness that scene without the power of the calm and affectionate service for the dead going far into his heart, and planting there some few thoughts of tenderer and

more delicate mould than he ever knew before? So strongly is this impression raised, that the lesson out of St. Paul has, I am sure, to many of us, become not so much a chapter of the Bible as a chapter of the Prayer Book. When we read it in the New Testament in its common order, it seems quite strange to us. We almost wonder how it came there. Its style seems distinct from the rest. It is to us a something quite different from any other chapter. No wonder. It belongs to the dead. Full as it is, oh! most full of perfect consolation, falling as it does upon our ears like the soft and soothing tones of church music, still it seems to be the especial inheritance of saints departed. And so we,—for we all of us have communion with the dead, and most of us trust we have some dear saints among them,—we read this chapter with a solemn and subdued feeling. Would that we could carry the same holy feeling with us all over the rest of Scripture! for depend upon it we are never so likely to catch the whispers of the still small voice that speaks out of the deep places of the Bible, as when this temper of subduedness comes over us. The world is

hushed within. It is unheard or unheeded without ; and our souls become like little weaned children. However, do all you can to keep up that solemn awe with which you read this chapter out of the Burial Service. Follow it as it lays open its precious glories, as it puts aside the sensual objections of the world to its doctrine, and then rises and rises steadily and calmly, clear as the angel's trumpet of which it tells, into the noise of triumph and of victory, and sends you back to your desolated homes with its cheering word of blessing, warning, and deep grave love. “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord !”

Now I am anxious to give you some serious reflections which you may connect with the Order for the Burial of the Dead ; so that when you read it by yourselves in the Prayer Book, or hear it read at a funeral, those high Christian doctrines which it embodies may arise, as it were, naturally in your hearts, and the feeling not die away within you without

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 58.

leaving something durable and solid behind it. It is unnecessary to go through the service, and show you how one part fits in with another, from the moment when the priest comes to meet the body at the entrance of the church-yard till the last prayer has been offered up by the opened grave. Those who have gone as mourners to the church know how the service adapts itself to their feelings, how it meets all their wants, says just what they would wish to say themselves, and in the very same order as they would say it out of the fulness of their hearts. The light in which I want you to view the Burial Service is this ;—as containing a great catholic truth, which breathes out in all its prayers, as well as in its psalms and lesson, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, the reverence due to the flesh of Christ's departed members ; for at His “coming all men shall rise again with their bodies : and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting : and they that have done evil into everlasting fire<sup>1</sup>. ” This is part of that most holy “Catholic faith : which

<sup>1</sup> Athanasian Creed.

except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved ;” and it is as the Church’s most solemn witness to that faith that I propose now to consider the order for the burial of the dead.

It might seem at first sight strange we should pay so much honour to the body ; that the committing it to the earth should be accompanied with so much reverent solemnity ; that it should be buried with psalms and prayers and the holy offices of the Church, in ground which a Bishop has consecrated. It might seem as if all this were only a pardonable allowance to the natural infirmity of human feelings, to soothe the bitterness of grief and sorrow, a last but vain outpouring of our love to the deceased. But though all this may be and is gained by the Burial Service, it is far from being the whole reason of it. It is founded on deeper and more sacred views : it is because our bodies are taken up into Christ’s body and are part of Him ; and while we thus honour His members whose spirits have passed away from earth, we manifestly set forth our own firm and unshaken faith in His glorious resurrection, and in our own also which shall follow hereafter.

The honour paid to the body is one of those

characteristic marks by which Christianity is at once distinguished from every other system of religion which has dared to lay claims to her sole and rightful title. With one single and dubious exception<sup>1</sup>, all the old false religions trod a directly opposite road. The highest point to which their endeavours tended, was to despise the body because of the greater honour of the soul; to treat it with contumely and all indignity, as a mere incumbrance to the upward soarings of the spirit. However much of truth, and truly there was not a little, the ancient Pagans did embrace in their systems, whether drawn from Hebrew fountains, or stumbled upon by the not unassisted mind in her dark questionings after it, still they had no idea of the glory of the flesh. A great philosopher of Rome says that two things only are impossible with God, to gift men with eternity, and to raise the dead: and one of the most famous of the Greek poets makes a god confess that he cannot raise the blood to life which the dust has once drunk in. It entered not, it could not enter into their poor philosophy, that what seems to them a weak frail vessel of clay,

<sup>1</sup> In the case of Egypt.

the unresisting victim of a thousand diseases, ever in the way of danger, could be full of lasting honour, a very shrine of immortality. This doctrine, however, was known to the Jewish Church, dimly perhaps as were most of her greatest things, seen as it were all lying in a grey and unsteady twilight : yet still it was known, and, as our Saviour's words show, so far clearly as to leave without excuse the sensual levity of the Sadducees who denied it. Enoch had ceased to be, for God took him. Samuel had risen in the midnight cave at Endor. The bones of a Prophet had imparted a living virtue to a body which had touched them. The widow of Sarepta had seen how prayer could bring the spirit back to the form of her lifeless son. All these notices pointed one way. A thoughtful and pious Israelite could not mistake them. The resurrection of the dead was the manna on which the patriarch Job had fed in his darkest hour, and it was all accomplished before the eyes of the prophet Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones. We are told in the Old Testament, that when Moses died in the mountain, God buried him ; and the fearful scene disclosed to us, when St. Jude

puts by the curtain for a while and shows us the Archangel Michael and the devil contending for the body, brings us a comfortable assurance, that very precious in the eyes of the Lord are even the bodies of His saints. But it was not till the full dawning of the day-spring from on high that this momentous doctrine was richly and fully revealed unto the Church. When God dwelt in the body of man, that great mystery of the Incarnate Word, when by the descent of His pure Flesh into the streams of Jordan He had sanctified water to the mystical washing away of sin, when He had given us His Flesh to eat and His Blood to drink that we might have life in us,—the medicine of immortality, as an early Christian called the blessed Eucharist,—then were our bodies made clean by His Body ; yea, as St. Paul saith, we became “ members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones <sup>1</sup> :”—“ for we being many are one bread, and one body : for we are all of us partakers of that one Bread <sup>2</sup>. ” The Trinity is imparted to us in our Baptism. Our hearts are now the temples of the Holy Ghost. Except we be reprobate, Jesus Christ dwelleth in us.

<sup>1</sup> Eph. v. 30.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. x. 17.

We are one with Christ and Christ with us.  
We have both the Father and the Son.

I know it is very overwhelming to contemplate these things, and then to recollect what we ourselves are. But we must not,—woe be unto us if we do!—speak slightingly of our own privileges, because we do not live up to them. Let us not be partakers in the pitiless spirit of the faithless Gadarenes, who prayed Jesus that He would depart out of their coasts because His mighty works were fearful in their eyes. If we have evil entreated those angels that have come to us, and would fain have dwelt in our hearts and done us good, when we find out who they are and why they came, let us not be like the Roman magistrates at Philippi, who, when they had beaten St. Paul, fell not trembling at his feet as the jailor did, but came and besought him, and brought him forth, and desired him to depart out of the city.

The way in which this doctrine of the Resurrection is held by the Catholic Church has been thus stated by one of our own Bishops. “That as it is appointed for all men once to die, so it is determined that all men shall rise from death; that the souls separated from our

bodies are in the hand of God and live ; that the bodies, dissolved into dust or scattered into ashes, shall be re-collected in themselves, and reunited to their souls ; that the same flesh which lived before shall be revived ; that the same numerical bodies which did fall shall rise ; that this resuscitation shall be universal, no man excepted, no flesh left in the grave ; that all the just shall be raised to a resurrection of life, and all the unjust to a resurrection of damnation ; and that this shall be performed at the last day when the trump shall sound. This is the doctrine which encourageth all drooping spirits, this sustaineth all fainting hearts, this sweeteneth all present miseries, this lighteneth all heavy burdens, this encourageth in all dangers, this supporteth in all calamities<sup>1</sup>."

Nothing need be added to this full and plain statement. This then is that great and glorious doctrine which is a chief part of our Christian inheritance ; a doctrine so great and so glorious, that all nature has been made to tell it as she goes her changing round. The perpetual succession of days and nights, the

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Pearson.

seasons of the year, rising and setting suns, growing and failing moons, all are natural types of the resurrection of the dead. “Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die<sup>1</sup>. ” So that an Apostle teaches us, that the very harvest which we reap to get our daily bread, is or ought to be full of holy thoughts and spiritual images ; God speaking out with quiet power among the most common things that lie about us.

There is one point in this doctrine which we must never lose sight of, namely, that the resurrection of our bodies comes of the resurrection of the Body of Christ. Throughout the Acts and the Epistles, the fact of the Master’s resurrection is put very prominently forward : and in filling up the vacancy caused by the death of the miserable Judas, the reason assigned for completing the college of Apostles was, that one must be ordained to be a witness with them of the resurrection. Wherever our resurrection is spoken of, it is in constant connection with Christ’s resurrection, and as a consequence of it. “Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 36.

first fruits of them that slept<sup>1</sup>.” “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death : that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection<sup>2</sup>.” We may see how prominent this doctrine was in St. Paul’s mind, by the stress laid upon it in his defence before Agrippa : “ And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers : unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead ?—King Agrippa, believest thou the Prophets ? I know that thou believest.” After a like sort he writes to the Philippians : “ Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. vi. 4, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xxvi. 6—8. 26.

and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death : if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead<sup>1</sup>.” Therefore Jesus Christ is our resurrection and our life, apart from Whom life is not, and resurrection cannot be, according to that glorious prophecy of Hosea : “ Come, and let us return unto the Lord, for He hath torn, and He will heal us : He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us : in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight<sup>2</sup>.” Neither must we omit to meditate reverently on the mysterious connexion put before us by holy Scripture and the Church, between the feeding on the Body of the Lord in the holy Communion, and the raising up of our bodies at the last day ; as it is carefully and meetly expressed by George Herbert :—

By the way of nourishment and strength,  
Thou creep’st into my breast ;  
Making Thy way my rest,  
And Thy small quantities my length ;  
Which spread their forces into every part,  
Meeting sin’s force and art.

---

<sup>1</sup> Phil. iii. 8. 10.<sup>2</sup> Hosea vi. 1, 2.

Give me my captive soul, or take  
My body also thither,  
Another lift like this will make  
Them both to be together.

Thus the priest, when he gives to each one singly the consecrated elements, says to each—“ The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.” For which great words, as well as in the prayer immediately preceding the consecration, the Church seems to refer to the language of her Lord, recorded by St. John : “ Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day <sup>1</sup>. ” And immediately afterwards : “ He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father ; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me.” This is not a subject for angry controversy, light language, or profanely curious speculation ; and, having pointed it out here as a deep and

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 53, et seq.

fearful truth connected with the honour of our flesh and its resurrection, we may leave it with the words of the *Homily of the worthy receiving and reverent esteeming of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ*<sup>1</sup>. It is well on such a doctrine to use language more authoritative than our own. “ Neither need we to think that such exact knowledge is required of every man, that he be able to discuss all high points in the doctrine thereof: but thus much we must be sure to hold, that in the Supper of the Lord there is no vain ceremony, no bare sign, no untrue figure of a thing absent: ‘ But,’ as the Scripture saith, ‘ the table of the Lord, the bread and cup of the Lord, the memory of Christ, the annunciation of His death, yea, the communion of the body and blood of the Lord, in a marvellous incorporation, which by the operation of the Holy Ghost (the very bond of our conjunction with Christ) is through faith wrought in the souls of the faithful, whereby *not only their souls* live to eternal life, but they surely trust *to win their bodies a resurrection* to immortality.’ The true understanding of this fruition and union, which is betwixt the Body

<sup>1</sup> Page 412. Oxford Edition.

and the Head, betwixt the true believers and Christ, the ancient Catholic fathers both perceiving themselves, and commanding to their people, were not afraid to call this Supper, some of them, *the salve of immortality and sovereign preservative against death*; other, a deifical communion; other, the sweet dainties of our Saviour, the pledge of eternal health, the defence of faith, *the hope of the resurrection*; other, the food of immortality, the healthful grace, and *the conservatory to everlasting life*. All which sayings both of the Holy Scripture and godly men, truly attributed to this celestial banquet and feast, if we would often call to mind, O how would they inflame our hearts to desire the participation of these mysteries, and oftentimes to covet after this bread, continually to thirst for this food!"

I. Many are the deep and fresh wells of living water which spring up out of this doctrine. It shows us more clearly, perhaps, than almost any other, the fulness and the perfectness of that salvation which has been wrought for us by the Son of God. It is in this doctrine mainly that He maketh a show openly of those powers over which He hath triumphed. For

“if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain<sup>1</sup>. ” “ If Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins ; then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished<sup>2</sup>. ” He then that hath done so much for us, that is so able an Advocate, so earnest an Intercessor, will not leave us nor forsake us. God that hath given us His own Son, will also with Him freely give us all things. And holy Scripture expressly teaches that it is by Christ’s resurrection that we are justified : “ He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification<sup>3</sup>. ” But what a light, at the same time, does this shed upon the nature of sin ! How far, how very far must man have travelled onwards in his ruin, when so vast a conquest was to be achieved for his recovery. I have already told you of all that has been wrought for our nature by Christ’s taking it upon Himself ; and all that has been wrought in our nature by the participation of Him in the blessed sacrifice. Thus it comes to pass that our members are not our own. They are all members of Christ. This is a truth so great that we can scarcely believe it ; yet it stands written—*for us now* ;

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 14.<sup>2</sup> Ib. 17, 18.<sup>3</sup> Rom. iv. 25.

it may be *against us hereafter*. Shall we by unclean thoughts pollute and desecrate the temple of the Holy Ghost; and make it, instead of a house of prayer, a den of thieves? Shall the mouth by which we bless God, and receive His many blessings, yea, even His Body and His Blood,—shall it be defiled by impure language, as it so very often is? Rather let it be like the gate of the sanctuary, in the vision of Ezekiel: “This gate shall be shut: it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut<sup>1</sup>!” Shall we again by any lustful and unchaste sins we think so lightly of, which yet are deadly sins, and stain so sadly our baptismal purity—shall we by these rend the veil of the temple wherein the holy Jesus dwells, even our own heart? Men have come to think that fornication and uncleanness are certainly sins, but not such very grievous ones as to throw us out of a state of grace, and cast us down from our Christian standing, and blot out our Baptism for the time. They fancy that the strength of the temptation goes a great way to

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xliv. 2.

excuse them. It would be well they should remember that the awful separation between deadly sins and venial sins is made and recognized by our Church in her article of Sin after Baptism ; and that in the Litany, fornication is named expressly as a deadly sin. It would be well they should remember how St. Paul distinguishes fornication from all other sins : “every sin that a man doeth is without the body ; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body<sup>1</sup>. ” The Apostle’s doctrine joins the mention of our resurrection with the condemnation of this most fearful sin. “Ye are washed—ye are sanctified—ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God . . . Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord ; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot ? God forbid. He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication<sup>2</sup>. ” Our bodies are mortal now no longer. They

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 18.<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. vi.

have been gifted with immortality. They are the temples of the most Holy Trinity. Oh ! how pure and chaste should we be. Let us seek that purity and chastity where the old saints found it, in strict and severe discipline. Let us then go on calmly in the road along which the Church is beckoning us, continually mortifying our desires, crucifying the flesh in little things, daily lessening our number of wants, using this life but as a tent that may be struck for each of us before to-morrow's sun has risen ; and so gradually loosening ourselves from earth. Thus God visits us with painful diseases, sometimes sharp and violent, sometimes lingering and dispiriting, not only as a punishment for our sins, but also as a means of sanctification. That blessed Spirit, Who is the giver of life, oftentimes conveys His best and richest gifts in the sufferings of bodily pain ; and this reflection should make us patient and resigned under disease, because God chastens the children whom He loves.

II. The Burial Service gives us another serious lesson. It bids us think oftener and more reverently of the dead. The times seem to get more and more worldly. The world is all

around us, and open before our eyes. It is a scene of care and fretfulness, full of tears and misery, of business, and of selfishness ; every man making haste to be rich, and one man's fall only making way for another man's advancement. Day by day it is sinking deeper and deeper in that covetousness, which is idolatry in Scripture language, though men may call it by the fairer phrase of commercial prosperity. It never stops a moment. The sound of its going is perpetual, day and night, like the throng of a crowded city. It is never out of our ears, and the sight of its populous multitudes makes us dizzy, and sick, and confused, as we watch them hurrying up and down the various paths of life, hot and weary, jostling and being jostled. What time have they to think about the dead ? how should quiet serious thoughts find their way into hearts so full of worldly things ? But a churchyard is a most unworldly place ; like a cool and shady seat by clear fresh fountains, where all things tell of another world, of death, of heaven, of eternity. We have not lost the dead. Death is but a word. They have not really died. They have only gone to live in another place.

And we ourselves never go to the Lord's Altar without blessing God for all those who have departed thither in His faith and fear. Surely, if we thought more about them, if we did not let the world break in upon our serious meditations with its vain and idle fashions, we should realize more than we do the communion of saints. Our thoughts would be so high and heavenly, that earthly things would seem mean and worthless in comparison of them. They would be like messages to us from another and a happier world, all full of peace and spiritual consolations. Indeed, before Christian times we find among the saints of the patriarchal and Levitical dispensations a continual anxiety and reverence both for the remains of their departed friends and for the place or manner of their own burial. It seems as if a strict carefulness for the bodies of the dead were at all times a natural sign of a really religious temper, and a deep feeling of the solemnity of death. Thus we find Abraham refuses to bury his dead in a field for which he had not duly paid ; and, when he himself is laid out in death, Isaac and Ishmael commit his body to the earth by Sarah's side. Again,

Israel entreats his son Joseph and lays him under an oath ; “ Deal kindly and truly with me, and bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt. But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place<sup>1</sup> :” as if that profane land were unworthy that he should rest there, or that he was fain his bones, at least, might inherit some portion of the earth, even then consecrated by promise. Joseph himself when he died took a like oath of his brethren, that they should carry his bones up with them out of Egypt : “ and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt<sup>2</sup>. ” To the carrying up of the mortal remains of Joseph a beautiful and affecting allusion seems to be made in the eightieth Psalm. “ Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock ; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth. Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up thy strength, and come and save us.” We read that when God appointed the order of march in the wilderness, the tribes went by threes ; first Judah, Issachar and Zebulun, then Reuben, Simeon and Gad ; after that the

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xlvi. 29.<sup>2</sup> Gen. l. 26.

ark of God's Strength, and the Levites round it; then Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, Joseph's sons and best beloved brother, bearing, as is said, and is indeed most natural, the bones of the patriarch; and finally, Dan, Asher, and Naphtali: and thus, instead of Jacob or Israel, the Psalmist says, “Thou that leadest *Joseph* like a flock.” So again when David vainly endeavours to persuade Barzillai to go with him to Jerusalem, the old man answers, “Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother<sup>1</sup>. ” When the disobedient man of God had been slain by the lion, the prophet, when he had buried him, spake to his sons, saying, “When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones<sup>2</sup>. ” And thus was his grave left undisturbed when Josiah came to fulfil the prophecy against the altar in Bethel and the high places of Samaria. It was for his piety in burying the dead, cast about the walls of Nineve, that Tobit was commended and received a blessing. And when Isaiah had taken

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. xix. 37.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings xiii. 31.

up his proverb against the king of Babylon, he said, “ All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial <sup>1</sup>. ” Lastly, we have the words of our blessed Lord commanding the waste, as it was deemed, of precious ointment : “ She hath wrought a good work upon Me ; for in that she hath poured this ointment on My Body, she did it for My burial <sup>2</sup>. ”

So intense was the desire among the early Christians of paying honour to the dear mortal remains of the saints, that the Pagans, to add fresh pangs to the bereavement, and (vain ignorance !) to disappoint them of the hope of resurrection, threw the bodies of the Lyonnese martyrs into the Rhone. St. Jerome did not dare to enter the churches where the bodies of holy martyrs lay, if he had lately offended by impurity, were it only in his dreams. St. Augustine, in his ‘ Treatise on the City of God,’ speaks honourably of attention paid to the bodies of Christians, as vases which the Holy Ghost has lighted up with good works ; and in

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xiv. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxvi. 12.

another place he says, the bodies of the saints are more glorious than if man had not fallen. Indeed, the same great Father wrote a whole book, (which is very striking and beautiful,) to Paulinus on the respect due to dead bodies, the propriety of funeral honours, and other similar questions. These instances out of Scripture and old Christian usage may be of service to us in deepening our views on this matter ; and make us think more sacredly of what seems to us the dull brown mould of churchyards, but which shall one day live and stir, and put on forms, and move towards the judgment-seat of Christ.

III. There must be some of my readers who have among the dead a parent, or a sister, or a friend. You have stood about the opened grave with a heart too full to weep. You saw the body of the departed slowly lowered into the damp and dewy earth ; and the green sods closed on the place of his repose. How desolate and dreary is the house of mourning when the funeral is over ; worse, far worse, is that time than the busy and distracting hour of death. So long as the body remains in its accustomed chamber, the full

bitterness of grief is not felt. There is a feeling in the mind—it is not hope, it cannot be, for we all know that is past and gone ; but there is a lingering feeling that we have not quite parted yet. The spirit still may hover about its ancient home ; and there is a placid meaning in the calm and smiling fixedness of those familiar features that feeds our grief, and on that account keeps back its worst and sharpest pangs. But when the funeral is over, then all this is torn up from within us. Our poor heart falls back upon itself. We sit down, as in a chill and lonely waste. We are listless and restless also. We can set ourselves to nothing. It seems as if we had nothing to do but to sit down and die ourselves. We have been accustomed to pray often and earnestly for our friend : and oh ! is there one struggle so sharp, one moment in life so dreadful, as when we kneel down to say our prayers the first night after his death, and remember all at once that we must pray for him now otherwise than we did before ? We are stunned by the shock. We scarcely know the words our lips are uttering, till we come to pray for him as before, when the habitual and half begun petition dies

away upon our lips, and we are awakened by a piercing sense of the exceeding burden of our loss. It is almost mockery to whisper consolation at such an hour as this. But when the fit is over and gone, when you can look collectedly on the quiet face of the departed, or see him entrusted, a most precious deposit, to the earth, then you may find, you will find, unsearchable riches of comfort in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. There is a sort of satisfying fulness in the teaching of the Church, as she leads you to the throne of grace with those spirit-stirring prayers of the Burial Service. You go home comforted in spite of yourself. Then, when with tearful eyes you gaze and gaze upon the lines of Holy Scripture, that tell us of the body's honour, they seem to fall upon us with a force we never felt before. Out of them, as from an endless fountain, bright hopes keep springing up, till our whole soul is overflowed with quiet thought. We have not seen the last of that beloved body. We have not lost for ever that earthly tabernacle that used to seem so beautiful to us, because we loved the heart that beat within it. No—it shall all come back again even as it

went. Changed as it shall be, transfigured with a new and sunlike glory, still it shall be the same ; and we shall know it to be the same, even as St. Peter did so strangely know Moses and Elias, when they talked with the Master in the Mount. Our vile bodies shall indeed be changed, and oh, blessed mystery ! be fashioned like unto His glorious Body : but still, amid it all, our friends shall say to us, and we to them, as He did before us, “ Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself<sup>1</sup> !”

<sup>1</sup> Luke xxiv. 39.

THE END.

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THE  
DIGNITY  
OF  
LITTLE CHILDREN.

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BY THE REV.  
FREDERICK W. FABER, M.A.  
FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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Thus saith the Lord of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.—ZECH. viii. 4, 5.

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\* \* \* This Sermon was originally preached in the North of England, among the Lakes, at a rural festival, called Rush-bearing Sunday, when the churches are decorated with flowers and rushes, about the end of the hay season, most probably in memory of the time when the common earth was the floor of the little churches of that district, and was annually strewn with green flags and rushes. Some have carried it back to a pagan origin.

THE DIGNITY  
OF  
LITTLE CHILDREN.

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ONE cannot be much in the habit of reading the Holy Scriptures, without feeling that there is something in them we cannot tell how to express. All we know is, that the Bible is very different from every other book we read : different, not only in its old quaint language, nor even in the subjects of which it treats, but different in the way in which it comes home to us, and opens our hearts, and shows us ourselves, and fills us one while with fears and strange sadnesses, another while with hopes and joys and glimpses of dim and half-seen glories, which bear us onward far away to a quiet place of pleasantness and rest. If we

open it in our mirth, it sobers and subdues us, and melts a proud man's heart to childish tears. Or, if we ask of the Oracle in dark and gloomy seasons of trouble, who does not know how soft and gentle thoughts keep rising up from the holy Book, like fresh water from a spring, and winning us to happiness in spite of ourselves. And all this because it is the Word of that God Who spoke in old time to His Prophet, not in the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire, but in the still small Voice. Not but that the Bible has its earthquakes and its fires to hard hearts and sinners that will not repent; but its whispers and its consoling melodies are ever heard deepest, clearest, sweetest, when tribulation makes us, like the lonely Elijah, wrap our faces in our mantles, because we cannot bear to look upon the world, or that the world should look on us. Now the reason of this is, because the Bible is no mere dead book, but a very living thing: "Quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword<sup>1</sup>," and piercing exceedingly. You recollect what the patriarch Jacob called

<sup>1</sup> Heb. iv. 21.

Bethel<sup>1</sup>—“a dreadful place,”—and why he called it so : “ Because God was in it and he knew it not.” Now, in like manner, and for the same reason, the Bible is a dreadful Book. The Holy Spirit dwells among its sacred mysteries, and moves up and down the hallowed pages, now lighting up the deep places therein, now carrying to thoughtless hearts with mighty power the hard sayings of it, or letting fall joy and consolation upon the mourner from passages he had often read before and found nothing in them. It is as the appearance of lamps in the vision of Ezekiel : “ The fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning<sup>2</sup>. ” Thus it comes about, that the Bible is never tired of giving up the new and rich treasures that are there, the goodly pearls which none can find save those that sell all and buy the field, and dig diligently day and night therein.

It is never out of place in God’s House to speak great things of God’s Word. And I have done it now, because many of you per-

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. i. 13, 14.

haps may never have been struck by a mysterious peculiarity in it, on which I am going to say somewhat at present. During the seventy long years of her sons' captivity, poor Jerusalem had lain in ruinous heaps. The glory of the Temple was departed. Her palaces were fast falling to decay. Her walls were thrown down about her, and the stranger was lord in her empty halls, for the sins of those that had dwelt therein. "This is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me<sup>1</sup>." But now the Prophet Zechariah is come to tell of her new glories, and in order to set forth most strongly the blessing which God would pour upon her, he draws this picture: "There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with a staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." Now this prophecy is an example of what I mean. Some of us, in reading the Bible, must have thought it very strange that there should have

<sup>1</sup> Zeph. ii. 15.

been so much about children in it. We are always meeting with them in one way or another. They occur over and over again in the historical books. The Psalms are full of them. They furnish the prophets with their commonest images. And, what is strangest of all, they occupy a very conspicuous place in the doctrine and teaching of our blessed Lord. It seems strange, yet, after all, it is most natural. If we have paid any attention to the characters of our friends, we must have seen that just in proportion to a man's holiness, to a man's softness of spirit, gentleness and affectionateness of heart, was his recurrence both in thought and in conversation to the days of early childhood. Indeed youth, which is in some sense the most Christian part of life, is always looking back; and they set most on memory who have least to recollect. And this is strange too, and yet most natural.

Now this prophecy of Zechariah leads us on to Gospel times. So let us take the Four Gospels, and see what we can learn from their frequent mention of children. And indeed a thoughtful man may find there a spiritual fulfilment of this prediction. When

our Saviour came, Jerusalem was rebuilt. The new temple, though not as the ancient one had been, was yet “exceeding magnifical.” The city was filled with multitudes of people. Old men and old women there were, waiting for His coming, and boys and girls that sang His praises, as they played about the streets. Simeon was an old man, yea, doubtless had a staff in his hand for very age. His life had been drawn out from year to year, that he might see the salvation of his God, and then depart in peace, because his loyal spirit could not hold the fulness of his joy. Anna, too, the grey-headed prophetess, she was permitted to see with her bodily eyes, now dim with age, that God Whom she had seen with the eye of faith for many a long year of service in His Temple. The young children, too, as they played, filled the courts of the Temple with their little Hosannas, and knew not what they did. But the Son of God was pleased and glorified by their unconscious praise ; and rebuked those that would have rebuked them, showing that they were, in their measure, fulfilling the sure words of prophecy. For it is written, “Out of the mouths

of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained praise<sup>1</sup>." Still more surely does this prophecy bring before us the Christian Church with all her gifts and graces. She has old men and women in her streets, the streets of the New Jerusalem, the city of our God. She has them kneeling at her altars for the bread of life, there eating angels' food. She filleth "their mouth with good things, making them young and lusty as an eagle." And she has boys and girls, ranged all along her aisles, lisping the name of God and of His Christ, saying solemn prayers, uttering great things out of their childish hearts, and singing lofty praises ; and all the while it is a Spirit working in them mightier than themselves, for they cannot tell as yet what all this holy service means.

It has not seemed good to the Holy Ghost to record much of our Saviour's infancy ; but what is given is full of teaching to ourselves. It would seem that so intimately was He acquainted with grief, so much was He a Man of sorrows, that none could touch Him

<sup>1</sup> Ps. viii. 2. St. Matt. xi. 25. xxi. 16.

or come near Him, but they must needs drink the cup which He drank, and be baptized with the baptism wherewith He was baptized. The little innocents of Bethlehem were only like Him in age ; yet that, it seems, was reason enough that they should be like Him in suffering too. Therefore, let not weak faith think it strange to see the agony children sometimes suffer when their souls, which Holy Baptism has so lately purified, are called from earth to heaven. It is a seal of their belonging to the family of Christ. It is a family of suffering, and all that are members of it must suffer with their Head. So He Himself began His precious blood-shedding when He was but eight days old, at His circumcision. So He first took upon Himself His power, and reigned and received homage as a King, when He lay in His mother's lap, and those wise Gentiles saw in the East the Star of which Balaam had prophesied, and by the leading of the Holy Ghost came on to Bethlehem to lay their gold and frankincense and myrrh at the young Child's feet. And then, as if to teach us that children were never too young to do Him service, He, being but

twelve years old, began already to be about His Father's business, and was found of His sorrowing mother disputing with the doctors in the temple. Then, when His public ministry began, we find Him loving to lay His hands on little children, and to bless them. He rebukes His Disciples, who were so dull-hearted they could see no meaning in what He did. He tells them that if any one offend one of these little ones, it were better for him that he had never been born, or that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck and he cast into the sea. He tells us of children, that their angels do always behold the face of their Father which is Heaven: and He teaches His disciples, and us among the rest, that "except we be converted, and become as little children, we shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven," because, as He said before, "of such," that is of little children, "is the kingdom of Heaven." Now who can read these things without being reminded of that God who made His covenant with Abraham, because He knew Him, "that He would command his children and his household after him, that they would keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and

judgment<sup>1</sup>?" And of the same God Who argued with the angry and petulant Jonah, "Thou hast pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night and perished in a night: and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle?" Lastly, we come to a passage in which all the others seem to meet, and by which we may explain them all: "Whoso shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me!" It is then because little children are Christ's brethren, it is because Christ Himself for their sakes became a little one, that so much is said about them in Scripture.

And how is it that they are in an especial manner Christ's brethren? It is because of Holy Baptism. You know they were born under a curse, children of wrath, conceived in sin. But Jesus, for the so great love wherewith He loved their souls, took them for His own when they were but a few weeks old. A

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xviii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Jonah iv. 10.

few drops of our spiritual Jordan sprinkled upon the unclean, the waters of Holy Baptism, made the flesh of the leper to come again unto the flesh of a little child, better far than all the kingly rivers of Damascus, better far than man's wisdom could have devised, or his cold, dull, stubborn heart even now believe. They were made "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven." Who shall tell their dignity? Who shall declare their spiritual generation? Sons of God! Heirs of Heaven! Joint heirs with Christ! The seeds of immortal life are sown very thickly in them. Their hearts are made the temple of the Holy Ghost. Jesus Christ dwelleth in them, except they be reprobate, which they cannot be. All this we were once: and in a measure are so still. We are still Christ's brethren, still God's children, still heirs of Heaven. But not as little children are. They have not sinned since, as we have done. They have not grieved the Holy Spirit, as we have done. Their coldness and their waywardness have not separated them from their elder Brother, as ours has often done. They have not left their Father's house, as too many of

us have done, for a land of rioting and wantonness and pleasure that cannot, will not, satisfy. They walk by faith, and not by sight. They have no wills, no ways of their own. They cannot, and so they wish not, to do anything for themselves. Therefore it is that their angels, not merely in times of earnest prayer, in venerable churches and at solemn sacraments, as ours perchance may do, but *their* angels *always* behold the face of their Father which is in Heaven.

This is the great and solemn view of children, as baptized children, which is given us in Holy Scripture. You will be at no loss to see why I have chosen to lay it before you on the present occasion, so intimately connected as it is with the religious meaning which has now been coupled with this rural festival. The garlands, with which the House of the Most High God is decorated, are full of holy mysteries and meanings. They throw us back into a different state of things. They remind us of a time when the churches, planted among these hills, were lowly, poor, and rude, as buildings, yet bright, most bright with the joy and thankfulness and loyal-hearted piety of the little flocks

who met therein for prayer and praise and sacraments. They call to memory the feast among the Jews, when water drawn from the sacred wells was borne about the courts of the temple ; while men waved green branches in their hands, and the voices of ten thousand of the sons of Abraham were heard chanting the glorious anthem of Isaiah : “ With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation <sup>1</sup>:” or that more Christian day, the Sunday of Palms, when Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and His triumphal way was strewn with the soft green shoots of early palms ; the day whereon the little children learnt the Hosannas they sung about the temple, as if to show how meet it was in us to join their cause and interests and happiness with a day of thanksgiving and of prayer. How then shall we best keep alive this simplicity and thankfulness in a part of the land where change comes later and moves more slowly than elsewhere ? How shall we be of one heart with our holy ancestors that sleep around us, but by training up the little ones amongst us in the paths of peace and plea-

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah xii. ; and see St. John vii. 37.

santness, by aiding the schools established here for their good, by being all of us priests, in the sense that all Christians are a royal priesthood, by helping to spread the Gospel among all? It is needless to add more: it is needless to explain the nature and the object and the management of these schools. Their object is the edification of the Church of Christ among His little ones.

Trouble is out upon the earth, and fear and expectation and restlessness and perplexity. Many run to and fro, and knowledge, that cold and barren and unloving thing, is much increased. All serious men are looking out for some great thing. They, who would fain adhere to ancient landmarks in Church and State, are full of trembling. They that love the old things, yet see that Church and State have altered, whether for better or for worse see also that the old things cannot remain as of old, and that the new things are not good, and they are full of perplexity. They who triumph at man's advance along the road of science and of power, watch the fearful swiftness of the current, and are not quite at ease as to what the end of all shall be. Oh! then

by the uneasy thoughts we all have for our dear country, by the lonely prayers we pray, by our wishes and our fears, by our dim hopes and beautiful regrets and sacred memories, let us throng in this day to aid the Church of God, the only power which can bear up against the world. There is much necessity for it. In this matter we have no differences, no diversity of opinions, no fatal prejudices, party prepossessions, or cruel misunderstandings of each other.

Surely to you, my brethren, who are natives of this place, who are so deeply, so intensely, interested in its welfare, it is unnecessary to speak. The heart that feels no yearnings towards the place of its abode, is too cold, too dead, to be moved by words of mine: colder far and deader than the poor pagan shepherds who once trod these hills, and lived among their gloomy woods. For they did beautiful things, yea, and holy things, when they hung their delicate wild flowers and green rushes about the trees and wells; albeit they darkly worshipped the Unknown God.

But there are others, who form no inconsi-

derable portion of my congregation, on whom it is needful I should urge my cause. There are many strangers here. They may have come among these hills only for pleasure and amusement. Yet, if they did, they must by this have learnt among their marvels, their lights and shades, their solitudes and strange recesses, some glorious things of the Lord their God,

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Here where He hath built  
For His own glory in the wilderness<sup>1</sup>.

My brethren, if this country has been to you a fountain of deep and serious thoughts, of holy and moral impressions, if you have looked upon it as in some sense a public domain wherewith God hath gifted our nation, if you have felt your love drawn to its lakes and rivers and hill-side villages in a way you never felt before, and cannot now explain, if you are carrying from it a thousand memories that will never desert you, sights and sounds and heavenly images to haunt you evermore, can you turn

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth.

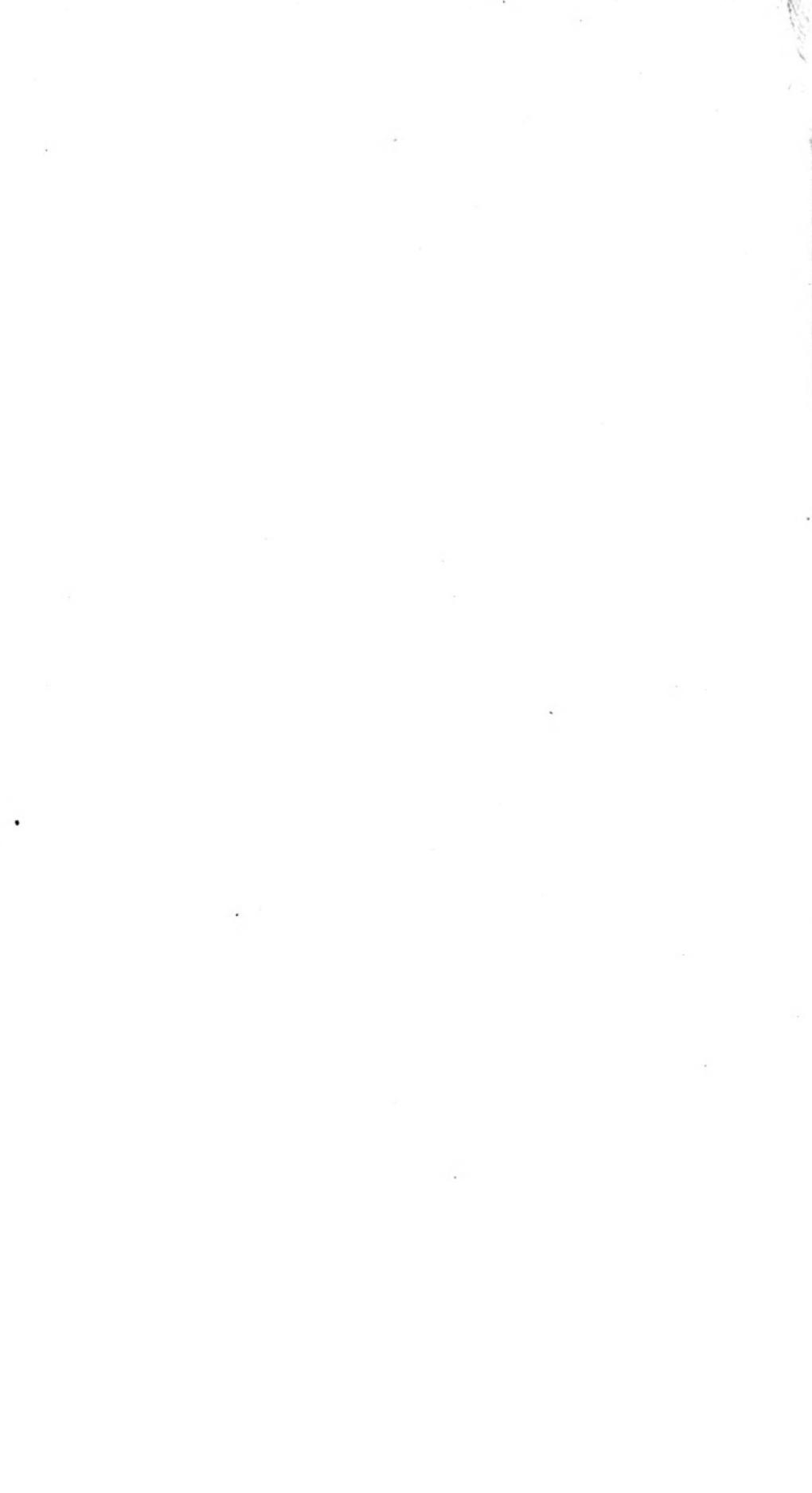
away and not leave a gift unto the Lord our God ? Oh ! it shall delight you afterwards to remember that upon these mighty hills, as on a holy altar, and altars green and glorious they are and not of man's building, you have left your full, free, self-denying offering. Let it be as full and free, as open and ungrudging as hath been the tide of joys which the land has poured in upon you from the throne of God that is set up so visibly therein. You may never have seen a Church of God so decorated as this. You may never see this holy rite again. Make, then, these garlands to minister to piety and holiness. Make them to be connected with the everlasting covenant, a type, a symbol of the freshness and innocence which the early lessons of the Gospel shall shed upon the little ones that would fain sing Hosannas in this mountain temple. Let this festival write upon our hearts a lesson deep and grave to bear unto our homes ; and let us leave the Holy Shrine this day with the words where-with the Three Children praised the Lord their God, a deep and silent, yet a thrilling Benedicite, filling our souls with thankfulness and love.

O ye mountains and hills, bless ye the Lord :  
praise Him and magnify Him for ever.

O all ye green things upon the earth, bless  
ye the Lord : praise Him and magnify Him  
for ever.

THE END.







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